A GRID AND GROUP DESCRIPTION OF IMPROVING SCHOOLS AND RAISING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT WITH SIX SREB LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

There was a time as late as the 1990s when educational leaders (teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members) were expected to make sure every classroom had a teacher and every student had a textbook. Discipline and order prevailed in the classroom. When students dropped out of school or were placed into lower level classes, their failure was regrettable, but not surprising (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001). Across the United States educational leaders were held accountable for improving our nation's schools that included setting higher standards for school districts and individual school sites to raise the achievement level for all students (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2002). Today, reform has become a permanent part of the educational process. According to Lashway (1999):

> The nature of educational reform is also changing, moving from top-down mandates to site-based innovations and from piecemeal programs to systemic restructuring. The reform movement that began with no more of a vision than greater rigor in traditional schooling now encompasses an array of transformative ideas: schools as learning communities, the central role of professional

development, meaningful parental involvement, and educational leadership that facilitates educational change into the process. (p. 1)

The Southern Regional Education Board hereafter will be referred to as (SREB), was founded in 1948 by southern leaders in business, education, and government. It has been proactive in focusing on educational leadership with the singular purpose of improving student achievement. However, despite the numerous educational programs and various reforms that have occurred during the past two decades, the progress of student achievement has been slower than expected (Hoachlander & Alt & Beltranena, 2001).

A publication by the SREB states that educational leaders should practice the following six school improvement strategies essential for improved instruction and student achievement: (1) raising the bar of higher expectations, (2) increasing student engagement and motivation, (3) providing focused, sustained professional development, (4) providing organized management practices, (5) building linkages, and (6) monitoring and accelerating improvement (Hoachlander, Alt & Beltranena, 2001).

The first strategy describes the importance of having higher expectations for students. High expectations for all students are important, but educators should include relevant curriculum and instructional practices that raise student achievement (Hoachlander et al., 2001). Educational leaders who are setting high expectations and a clear vision for student learning are promoting student achievement and school improvement (Bowles, King & Crow, 2000).

Schools that are considered high performing are characterized by a shared vision. They have linked student learning to higher standards, a challenging curriculum, and

higher expectations for all students (Hord, 1992). The process for raising student achievement is slow and complicated. Educational leaders, who are raising expectations, developing faculty members through professional development, and implementing changes in curriculum and instruction, are developing successful school organizations (Hoachlander et al., 2001).

The second strategy concerns increasing student engagement and motivation. Students are engaged in the learning process through their behavioral and emotional dimensions. Students' behavior determines their perception and sense of belonging or engagement within the culture of the school. The following factors have affected student engagement: "Parental support, health, peer pressure, previous school experiences, and life experiences" (Hoachlander et al., 2001, p. 18). Students actively involved in the learning process are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and successful. Students who are engaged in the delivery of the instructional process are more likely to be motivated and successful than those who are only passive listeners (Tanner, Bottoms, Feagin & Bearman, 2001). According to Tomlinson (2002), "Students care deeply about learning when their teachers meet their need for affirmation, contribution, purpose, power, and challenge" (p.5).

The third strategy discusses educational leadership that is providing focused, sustained professional development. Implementing professional development results in redirecting schools toward a common vision of higher expectations, strengthening the curriculum, improving instructional strategies that are meeting students' learning styles, and improving support services. Professional development is vital when determining the school's site improvement plans that include specific strategies, target groups, reasonable

timelines, and resource allocations (Hoachlander et al., 2001). The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, a program of the Council of Chief State School Officers (1996), identifies professional standards for educational leaders. One of the standards is as follows: “An educational leader promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program that is conducive to student learning and staff professional growth” (p. 12). Teachers who receive time for professional development are sharing and changing their instructional strategies and are meeting the changing, learning styles of students. Teachers participating in professional development are better prepared by providing appropriate learning strategies and activities that raise student learning opportunities and achievement (Hudson, 2002).

The fourth strategy presents organizational and management practices that support student learning strategies by implementing policies and procedures placing students’ needs and achievement as priorities (Hoachlander et al., 2001). In some schools organizational and management practices respond to multiple demands for accountability, changing cultural and societal issues. The traditional structures of many schools may contribute to student alienation, academic failures, and create schools as impersonal institutions. Low expectations for students and teacher-based curriculum are leading to unmotivated and passive students (Marsh & Codding, 1999). Changes made in the management process, organizational structure, and management styles create learning environments that are meeting the students’ needs and increasing student achievement (Gaynor, 1998). The following successful organizational and management practices establish successful organizational policies and address factors that determine long-term success: (1) leadership, (2) active participation in program planning, (3) adequate time,

resources, and alignment with the school district and state policies (Weissberg, Resnik, Payton, & O'Brien, 2003).

The fifth strategy includes the development of the process of building linkages where the school's responsibilities and goals are communicated to the community (parents, employers). This strategy allows parents and business owners to support the school's goals with resources and high expectations (Hoachlander et al., 2001). According to the *NEA Today* (October, 2001), "School-community partnerships for school development now involve 69 percent of U.S. schools, an increase from 51 percent in the past decade" (p.16). Educators across America are finding new resources outside their own school buildings through developing partnerships and establishing foundations. School districts use city businesses, county businesses, and industries, locating small grants for teaching materials, products for renovation, and capital development (Tomlin, 2002). Schools accessible to the community are raising student motivation, improving security for the school site, reducing vandalism, and improving links with the community. These links with the community reinforce the fact that all education relates to the wider community, the world of work, and professional practice (York, Doan, & Heir, 2002).

The sixth strategy incorporates monitored and accelerated improvement, assessment, and accountability. The greatest challenges for educators are using assessment strategies appropriately. Educators should use assessment data to improve instructional strategies and allow practices that encourage students to be responsible for learning. According to Hoachlander et al. (2001), "Teachers should direct curriculum and instructions toward specific forms of assessment" (p. 37). Schools that use data to make

decisions are following the best advice from the world of business and education (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000).

> Successful organizations do not just collect data they revere it. They aren't satisfied with data until data have life and meaning for every teacher, every pertinent party. They use data to create and ensure an objective commonly held reality. The use of data allows for organized, simplified discussions that merge to create focused priorities and productive action. (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000, p. 51)

Assessments are used as a means for ranking schools and students, changing the way in which teachers use assessment results, improving the quality of classroom assessments, and aligning assessments with valued-learning goals and state standards. The benefits for all educators and students will be limitless when teachers use classroom assessments as an integral part of the instructional process and help students learn (Guskey, 2003).

Problem Statement

The last 20 years have witnessed unparalleled efforts to improve schools and raise student achievement. In those reform efforts "educational leadership" has become a popular term and is considered a solution for the many problems of modern education. Most notably, in a recent SREB publication, *Leading School Improvement: What the Research Says (2001)*, the authors stated that the six school improvement strategies are essential in the improvement of instruction and student achievement: "(1) raising the bar,

(2) increasing student engagement and motivation, (3) providing focused, sustained professional development, (4) providing organizational and management practices, (5) building linkages, and (6) monitoring and accelerating improvement" (Hoachlander et al., 2001, p. i). A problem the authors of this publication admit is that while educational leadership is vitally important in school reform, improvement of instruction, and student achievement, "Most evidence on how to implement these strategies is ambiguous" (Hoachlander et al., 2001, p. 11).

The predicament of why certain educational leaders practice the six school improvement strategies when others do not is an important issue in education today. There is evidence the strategies are effective even without total acceptance, and even when educational leadership agrees on a strategy, it can be implemented incorrectly. However, a single strategy implemented in isolation is unlikely to influence student achievement but blends many practices into a balanced package of school improvement (Hoachlander et al., 2001).

Even though effective educational leaders understand the elements that contribute to student learning they can assemble these strategies into unambiguous instructional programs and can work with all stakeholders to implement these practices. The segregation remains between those who implement these strategies and those who do not. Some of the segregation can be attributed to internal and external cultural barriers. These barriers are rooted in the basic organization and operation of public schools, the ways they are governed, what is valued, how people are rewarded, how career pathways are defined and supported, and how schools are held accountable (Hoachlander et al., 2001).

A school's organization may be unclear about the characteristics of an effective educational leader and what their roles are. Schools must be willing to define, develop, and support educational leadership by making improvements in teaching and learning the top priorities in the following areas: incentives and rewards; the relationship between school management and instruction; and the interaction between local political and effective school governance (Elmore, 1999).

The concept of organizational culture is created by leaders, and one of the most decisive functions of leadership may well be the creation, the management, and if and when the destruction of culture may become necessary. The desire to change the culture may become tantamount to destroying the group, and creating a new one, which will build or evolve a new culture (Schein, 1985).

According to Kilman (1985), organizational culture is a social energy that moves people to act. "Culture is to the organization what personality is to the individual, a hidden, yet unifying theme that provides meaning, direction, and mobilization" (p. 17). The following four organizational conditions must exist in order for basic assumptions of structural and systems to be valid: (1) a self-correcting system of interdependent people (2) consensus of objectives and methods (3) coordination achieved through sharing information, and (4) predictable organizational problems and solutions. In both the modern structural and the systems theories of organization, organizations are assumed to be utilitarian institutions whose primary purpose is to accomplish established goals Kilman, 1985).

There are three types of cultural change: (1) revolutionary and comprehensive efforts to change the cultures of the entire organization; (2) efforts confined largely to

changing specific subcultures or subunits within organizations, and (3) efforts that are gradual and incremental, but nevertheless cumulate in a comprehensive reshaping of an entire organization's culture (Trice & Beyer, 1993).

The benefits provided by educational leadership promote success for all students by: (1) facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the community; (2) advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and the professional growth of staff members; (3) ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment; (4) collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources; (5) acting with integrity, fairness, and ethics; and (6) understanding, responding to and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts (Murphy & Yff & Shipman, 2000, p. 17).

One solution for the dilemma of how the leadership strategies can be implemented is found in the studies of Mary Douglas' Grid and Group Typology. Douglas (1982) suggests that human beings attempt to understand the world and coordinate their lives with the people around them within a particular cultural environment. Mary Douglas' typology refers to the individual's choices and social incorporation (Harris, 1995).

According to Clay (2003):

> Mary Douglas, a British anthropologist, has devoted her career to explaining what humans do. She suggests that human beings are trying to understand the world and coordinate their lives with the people around them. Where other models of

culture seem to leave out important parts of human experience, Douglas' inclusive model leaves room for all conceivable ways of finding meanings. (p. 1)

Douglas' Typology of Grid and Group is the framework used in this study to explain two schools attempting to implement some or all of the six leadership strategies. The grid and group typologies help predict the relationship between the changing social organization and the changing view of the world (Clay, 2003). It is important to have an understanding of the principals and teachers' perceptions in order to place the culture on the scale presented by Douglas. With the help of the grid and group template, school culture is placed on a continuum from low grid to high grid, and from weak group to strong group. The principals and teachers provide insight when explaining the interrelationship between the culture and the implementation of these six strategies. The principals and teachers may believe the school's culture and implementation of these leadership strategies are independent, but cultural power struggles create instability and change (Clay, 2003).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explain how organizational culture affects the implementation of the six school improvement strategies in two schools; to research and find factors that influence individual faculty members to practice the strategies; and to describe the relationships of grid and group in the decision making process to implement

the practices. For the purpose of this study, educational leadership is limited to principals and teachers.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the grid and group makeup of each school?
2. How does the Grid and Group Typology explain the practice of the six school improvement strategies?
3. If there are any incongruities between the grid and group makeup of each school and the data collected, how can they be explained?

Conceptual Framework

The educational leadership problems or barriers have little to do with preparation, but are rooted in the organizational structure of the school and the ways they are governed, what is valued, how people are rewarded (monetarily and other ways), how career pathways are defined and supported, and how schools are held accountable, both internally and externally (Hoachlander et at., 2001). If we only consider the barriers and benefits without considering the cultural perspective, we may not be able to explain the conflicts among educational leaders who implement the school improvement strategies.

The theoretical framework of this study is Douglas' typology. Mary Douglas' typology gives researchers the opportunity to view participants as they interact and communicate as individuals and as a group. The degree of social interaction, individuality, and group involvement determines the view of the participants' world (Spickard, 1989). For example, individuals within an organization may identify their significance or view the world through the lens of the culture (Kuh & Whitt, 1988).

A school's culture is a complex pattern of norms and traditions deeply perceived in the core of the organization that is communicated through patterns of meaning, shaping what people think, and how they will act (Barth, 2002). A school's culture will determine how the school improvement process will be implemented. Before any changes are practiced, the cultures' values and priorities are identified. As the culture changes, new ideas will provide a vision for professional development that will improve instructional strategies and learning (Ginsberg & Murphy, 2002).

The relationship between the individual and the social environment is unique (Harris, 1995). This relationship or interplay between the individual and the social environment is described by Douglas (1982) with a "grid for a dimension of individualization and group for a dimension of social incorporation" (p. 620).

Grid refers to the degree in which an individual's choices are constrained within a social system or culture by obligatory formal prescriptions such as role expectations, rules, and procedures (Douglas, 1982). The grid dimension describes the individual's obligation to others without measuring this in terms of group membership (Spickard, 1989). For instance, the freedom to choose curriculum, teaching strategies, or grading patterns may be regulated by technical guidelines (Harris, 1995). This bureaucracy within

the organization may limit the individual's creativity and take it for granted (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988). Douglas' research (1982) identifies the individuals as valuable cultural members with abilities to make decisions. Group represents the value that people place on collective relationships within a social unit rather than on the individual (Gross & Rayner, 1985). The survival of the group becomes the most significant issue within a high group social environment. Individual members are expected to follow certain guidelines that promote group survival and isolate or resist relationships with those outside of the social culture (Harris, 1995).

Methodology

Research in education is a restricted attempt to address questions or find solutions for problems through the collection and analysis of data for a description, explanation, generalization and prediction (Anderson, 1998). This is an explanatory case study that examines two school sites where educational leaders have attempted to implement the six school improvement strategies. The methodology is embedded in the assumption that educational leaders who have practiced these strategies are organizationally and culturally derived. According to Anderson (1998), explanatory research asks the question, "What is causing this to happen" (p.10)?

This study uses a qualitative approach to research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994):

> Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers

> study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interaction, and visual texts—that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (p. 2).

The qualitative approach gives the researcher understanding of the everyday lives of the people involved in the culture of the school where the implementation of the six leadership strategies are taking place. According to Woods (1999), the main features of qualitative research include, "Focus on natural settings – concerned with life as it is lived, things as they happen, situations as they are constructed in the day-to-day, moment-to-moment course of events" (p. 2-3).

The qualitative methods used to gather data for this study are participant questionnaires, observations, documents, artifacts, and interviews with principals and teachers. The qualitative researcher discovers the participants' evaluation of the leadership strategies by attaching to their behavior, how they will interpret situations, and what their perspectives will be on particular issues (Woods, 1999). This methodology of this study allowed the researcher to gain access to the participants and discover meaning and understanding the assumption that the practice of the six school improvement strategies is culturally and historically derived. The qualitative researcher is interested in how understandings are formed, how meanings are negotiated, and how roles are developed (Woods, 1999). The researcher attempts to enlighten the world of observation by describing the voices, emotions, and actions of those being studied. These findings are

interpreted and written for reader understanding (Denzien, 1989). According to Woods (1999), “Qualitative researchers do not, on the whole, start with a theory which they claim to test and prove or disprove, though there is no reason why they should not do that if they wished” (p. 2-3). The researcher is trying to emphasize and create for the reader the perception of being a witness during the research process (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

In a qualitative case study the researcher is the primary instrument utilized to gather and analyze data and is subject to researcher bias. My experience as an educational leader in four different high schools has influenced this research of implementing the school improvement strategies. Through my working relationships with many educational leaders, I have been exposed to various perceptions of the practice of school improvement strategies. My own belief and practice of school improvement strategies as a teacher and administrator have influenced my interpretation of the data. The researcher has the ability to respond to the participants’ perspective, process and summarize data as the study evolves (Merriam, 1988).

One of my goals as a researcher is to allow the reader to understand the six leadership strategies and the degree in which these strategies are implemented within the grid and group dimensions of the school’s environment.

Setting and Participants

The research was conducted in two public high schools located in the southwestern part of the United States. There was a minimum of ten teachers’ interviews per school site, and one assistant principal or principal interview from each school site.

The interviews were conducted between the months of October 2003 and August 2004. The participants were selected based on their knowledge of the six school improvement strategies and cultural awareness; their willingness to discuss the strategies; and interviewee who represents a wide range of points of views (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The principal and assistant principal answered the same interview questions. The questions for respondents were open-ended (see Appendix D).

Data Collection

According to Anderson (1998), "Data collection and data analysis are concurrent activities. It is crucial that the primary researcher is involved in all aspects of collecting data, interpreting and analyzing findings, and recasting the issues as the study unfolds" (p. 157). This study used different types of data collection methods including a questionnaire, observation, artifacts, document analysis and interviews.

A uniform questionnaire (see Appendix F) was used asking respondents the same questions. Their answers were tallied and placed in either high or low, grid and grip categories (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Interviews played an important role when the data were collected during the explanatory case study (Cresswell, 1998). The researcher's observation or engagement into the field allowed descriptions and notes to be written that contributed to the researcher's becoming familiar with the setting and vocabulary (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). Physical artifacts and documents provided insight about people, organizations, and cultures (Anderson, 1998). The data collection ended when all sources of data were studied and categories were identified (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data Analysis

Analyzing data is a continuous process. The data are separated into parts or themes to allow conclusions to be drawn from the questionnaires, observations, and interviews (Kvale, 1996). According to Anderson (1998), data analysis involves the following elements: "Interpreting findings while in the field, coding and organizing the data into themes and constructs, searching for disproving themes or evidence, and testing alternative interpretations of the data to see if the researcher's understanding of the information changes" (p. 157-158).

After the participants completed the questionnaires a frequency count was conducted and tallied (see Appendix G). Analysis of the interviews was done from verbatim transcription. The field notes were taken and analyzed along with the interviews. The analysis of documents and artifacts took place as they were gathered. All documents, interviewing transcripts, and observation notes were reviewed before and after the next data collection session (Bogdon & Biklen, 1982). As the data was collected it was physically organized into descriptive themes that emerged during the data collection and preliminary analysis, and then, extending the analysis to examine the findings in consideration of existing literature and theory.

Data analysis uncovers themes hidden throughout the interviewing process. Themes and perceptions are woven into a broad explanation to guide the final stages of the research process (Antaki, 1988; Antaki & Leudar, 1992; Charmaz, 1983; Glasser & Strauss, 1967; Mumby, 1993; Russman, 1993; Spradley, 1979; Strauss, 1987; West,

1990). After the collection of data it is coded, organized, searched for themes, and finally, it is interpreted to check for researcher understanding (Merriam, 1988).

Mary Douglas developed a comparative method called grid/group. Through her typology researchers are allowed the opportunity to discover the sociological, conceptual, and methodological barriers in culture inquiry. Douglas' research (1982) identifies individuals where cultural and environmental factors affect the ability to make decisions. Harris (1995) explains the relationship between the individual and the social environment through grid and group. Grid and group describe the social life found in every social structure. This relationship is described by Douglas (1982), "use a grid for a dimension of individuation and group for a dimension of social incorporation" (p. 620).

Grid and group are beneficial for my study. Educators are surrounded by social life within their school cultures. Every school has a culture with unique roles and rules that are placed upon every individual in the organization. These factors influence the implementation of the six school improvement strategies.

Significance of the Problem

Educational accountability is changing the educational leadership practices that are preparing students for success. Educational leadership is becoming more responsible for directing and improving instructional strategies and raising student achievement (Bottoms, 2001). Strong educational leaders manage curriculum and daily instructional practices which maximize student achievement (Hoachlander et al., 2001). Concerns about educational leadership, educational reform, and student achievement are not new

(Alkin, 1992). There are many publications that have information about educational leaders and show how these leaders are the key attributes who direct and implement changes in curriculum, instruction, and school organization (Covey, 1990).

One concern is the number of educational leaders retiring and resigning from education in unprecedented numbers. During the last three years across the nation one-third of all principals are leaving the profession. Two-thirds of principals in the middle grades and high schools are eligible for retirement within five years (Glass, 2000). The increasing pressures from high responsibilities, the stresses of the job, and unreasonable time demands discourage the most able candidates from pursuing leadership positions in education (Hoachlander et al., 2001). Schools are isolating the principal for the responsibility of instructional leadership, but instructional leadership is everyone's responsibility. Educators are developing the leadership capacity of the whole school community.

Definitions of Terms

Advisory – Provides guidance and counseling while assisting students in establishing the connection between what they are learning in school and their goals beyond high school (Louisiana Department of Education, 1999).

Career Academies or Clusters – According to the Louisiana Department of Education (1999) they have the following three major components: "(1) school-based learning, (2) work-based learning (practical experience or training), and (3) connecting activities. When students see a connection between what is learned at school and the skills they will

need in the work place, they are motivated to reach their academic potential" (p. 9). The student may have an interest in one of the following clusters:

- Advanced Technology – Students will work with things in a series of sequenced courses for a technical and engineering career.
- Business and Marketing – Students will work with money, solve problems, initiate projects, and market ideas.
- Fine Arts and Communication – Students will sketch, draw, play musical instruments, sing, dance, and take photos.
- Health – Students interested in a high paying career and working with people, animals, and living organisms.
- Social, Technology and Mathematics – Students will work in the fields of astronomy, meteorology, pharmaceutical research, and genetic research.
- Social Sciences – Students will love to help people and be there for others in need.

Educational Leader – Master teacher, principal, superintendent, or school board member that defines and improves curriculum and instruction. He or she maximizes student achievement by leading and shaping the daily practices of formal schooling (Hoachlander et. al, 2001).

Explanatory Case Study – Presents data bearing on cause-effect relationships in an effort that explains which causes produce which effects (Yin, 1993).

Grid and Group Typology – Individual's experiences are measured with degrees, limits, and freedoms in their relationships with others (Spickard, 1989).

High Schools That Work (HSTW) – The nation's largest and fastest-growing reform effort to combine challenging academic courses and modern vocational studies. Their goal is to raise the achievement of career-bound high school students. The program is based on the belief that students who follow general and vocational programs of study can master complex academic and technical concepts if schools create an environment that encourages students to make the effort to succeed. HSTW member schools are implementing the six leadership strategies (Louisiana Department of Education, 1999).

Instructional Leadership – The principal's roles in a learning climate, working with personnel (hiring, firing, and evaluating), and providing curricular leadership (Miller, 2001).

No Child Left Behind – Reauthorizes the ESEA, incorporates increased accountability for states, school districts, and schools; greater choice for parents and students, particularly those attending low-performing schools; more flexibility for states and local educational agencies in the use of federal education dollars; and a stronger emphasis on reading, especially for our youngest children (http://www.ed.gov).

School Improvement – Providing a better education for all students that focuses on better results and the conditions that promote them (Schmoker, 1999).

Six Leadership Strategies – Research –based practices for school improvement: (1) raising the bar, (2) increasing student engagement and motivation, (3) providing focused, sustained professional development, (4) providing organizational and management practices, (5) building linkages, (6) monitoring and accelerating improvement (Southern Regional Education Board, 2001).

Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) – A school-wide improvement effort that is dedicated to providing a quality education and raising student achievement for all students (Southern Regional Education Board, 2001).

Summary

The purpose of this study is to explain how organizational culture affects the implementation of the following six school improvement strategies: (1) raising the bar of higher expectations, (2) increasing student engagement and motivation, (3) providing focused, sustained professional development, (4) providing organized management practices, (5) building linkages, and (6) monitoring and accelerating improvement (Hoachlander, Alt & Beltranena, 2001).

Douglas' Typology of Grid and Group is the framework used in this study to explain two schools attempting to implement some or all of the six leadership strategies. The grid and group typologies help place the school culture on continuum from low grid to high grid, and from weak group to strong group. The principals and teachers provide insight when explaining the interrelationship between the culture and the implementation of these six strategies.

Teachers and administrators must work together to change the culture of a school, so that innovations, higher standards, and raising student achievement are accepted as elements of the culture. According to Barth (2002), "Changing a toxic school culture into a healthy school culture that inspires life-long learning among students and adults is the greatest challenge of educational leadership" (p.6). The changing culture will create a

vision of professional practice that links leading and learning (Ginsberg, M.B. & Murphy, D., 2002). While some schools have teachers and administrators who are reformers, most school cultures are neutral to reform and resistant to change, making school improvement a challenging process (Barth, 2002). Failure of educators to change the culture makes reforms incapable of making a difference (Barth, 2002). A school's culture is either warm and positive or negative and toxic; a school's culture either prohibits or promotes reform (Barth, 2002).

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this case study is to explain how organizational culture affects the implementation of the following school improvement strategies in two high schools: (1) raising the bar of higher expectations, (2) increasing student engagement and motivation (3) focusing to sustain professional development, (4) using organizational and management practices (5) building linkages, and (6) monitoring and accelerating improvement (Hoachlander, et al., 2001).

The focus of this research is on teachers' and principals' perceptions of the practices of these leadership strategies, improving instructional strategies, and increasing student achievement. For this study, educational leadership is limited to principals and teachers. A principal contributor to this study is Mary Douglas. Douglas' Typology of Grid and Group explains the interrelationship of culture and the practice of the strategies.

The Southern Regional Education Board

In 1948, the Southern Regional Education Board, hereafter referred to as (SREB), was created by several southern states to help government and educational leaders work together to advance social and economic life within the region. In 1985, the SREB issued a vocational education report that recommended several key school improvement practices. A few months later, a group of vocational education directors working with SREB officials designed the program that became High Schools That Work, hereafter referred to as (HSTW). Political and educational leaders realized students taking vocational courses were also taking less rigorous academic courses. The HSTW program was launched in 1987 with 28 pilot sites in 13 states.

The HSTW program's goal is to increase the mathematics, science, communication, problem-solving, career, and technology achievement of career-bound students to the national average of all students. The foundation of the HSTW program is for schools to eliminate the general education academic courses and combine the basic content of college preparatory English, mathematics, and science courses with career-tech studies. All students will be enrolled in the same challenging courses that are traditionally taught only to those labeled college-bound (Miller, 1997).

These college-preparation courses use hands-on teaching methods like group projects, laboratory experiments, and abstract concepts with concrete examples. According to Miller (1997):

> Geometry students in one HSTW school study the way a house is put together. A rural teacher uses the operation of a combine to teach principals of physics.

> Students in English classes write resumes for fictional characters or produce their own books. Science students calculate the volume and speed of water flowing through a brook and measure pollution levels. (p.27)

The HSTW network uses a standardized achievement test that is based on the National Assessment of Education Progress and is randomly given to students in the fourth, eighth, and twelfth grades. These tests measure the students understanding in reading, math, and science. Previous results show that the vocational students are completing the HSTW'S college-prep curriculum, and consistently outperforming those who do not, although they do not reach the national average score for all high school students in reading, math, and science (Miller, 1997). The SREB recommends high school students take at least four years of English, three years of math and science, and a total of six credits in vocational areas (Miller, 1997).

Despite the development of the HSTW practices, basic school improvement strategies have been implemented slowly. One reason for the slow progress is the need for stronger school leadership. One requirement for school leadership is the ability to blend many practices into a balanced, well-managed package of school improvement. The SREB through its review of educational literature describes six strategies for successful school improvement.

Following is an explanation of these strategies. However, I recommend that the reader refers to the SREB publication, *Leading School Improvement: What Research Says*, for more clarification.

Raising the Bar: Higher Achievement for All Students (Strategy #1)

The first school improvement strategy emphasizes a school climate of high expectations where faculty members and administrators believe and demonstrate that all students can attain mastery of priority academic skills. Further, faculty members have high expectations for themselves and students and believe they have the capabilities to encourage all students to attain success (Lezotte, 2004).

Students' academic accomplishments are likely to meet their parents' expectations. Gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and previous academic records influence expectations. Educators must expect more from students and provide instructional strategies that meet the needs of all students. Teachers' instructional methods should stress high expectations. Good instructional planning begins with high expectations for all students and motivates all students to learn at higher levels. Teachers should plan instructional strategies that meet the students' different learning styles (Tanner, 2002).

Increase academic requirements. Schools are setting higher academic standards based on the NCLB mandates. These regulations are creating high-stakes assessment procedures and holding schools accountable for student achievement. Successful school

leaders are increasing academic rigor, reducing the number of lower-level courses, and ensuring that all students have access to high-level content (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001).

Successful educators believe that increasing academic thoroughness and eliminating lower-level courses have a positive influence on student achievement. Allowing all students, instead of only the highest achieving students, the opportunity to complete college-preparatory courses increases student achievement (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001).

Eliminate student grouping. Parents, teachers, and even community members that label and group students will find higher student success rates through higher expectations, by giving more students access to demanding courses (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001). For example, students benefit from teachers who encourage them to work when they are tired and do not feel like completing their assignments. When educators do not have high expectations for all students, the students' efforts will decline and the work will never be completed (Corbett & Wilson, 2002).

Schools that serve high percentages of poor children face enormous challenges. Educators in these schools should not lower expectations. According to Guskey (1998), "Would anyone, for example, recommend that schools serving poor students set their basketball goals at nine feet instead of 10? Is lowering the expectations for a student's learning ability any less so" (p. 9)? Educators who are satisfied with the status quo believe that all children regardless of socio-economic status and ethnicity have the same opportunity to learn (Gusky, 1998).

Increasing Student Engagement and Motivation (Strategy # 2)

The second school improvement strategy is increasing student engagement and motivation. Students are more likely to be engaged and motivated in their educational process if they participate in the classroom and are involved in extra-curricular activities. Students will have a sense of belonging if they identify with a group, team, or an adult within the school. Teachers should address the following needs that motivate students to learn: affirmation, contribution, purpose, power, and challenge. Teachers discover when the learning environment and the instructional strategies work together they motivate students to learn (Tomlinson, 2002).

Pedagogy. Educators are trained and should be knowledgeable in their certification area and practice instructional methods that motivate and engage students. The teacher should use instructional methods that present the curriculum to students allowing the subject matter to connect to real-world problems (Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001). Pedagogy that connects the subject matter with the student's lives and experiences outside of the classroom positively affects the student's learning experience.

Student-centered learning is based on the practice of students being active in their learning process thus increasing engagement and motivation. Students are empowered to ask questions, discover answers, and use projects to understand complex issues. Student centered-learning allows the teacher and student to share the responsibilities for

instruction, assessment, and keeping the focus on the academic standards (Bottoms, Tanner, Feagin, & Bearman, 2001).

Teachers who promote high expectations allow students the opportunity to be responsible for their own learning. Students are expected to perform at their highest capabilities without excuses, but if a teacher allows students to remain idle in class, other students will follow. If students are dedicated to learning and willing to help each other in class, every student has a better opportunity to be successful (Easton, 2002).

Curriculum. Students seem to concentrate more when they are focused on one organizing theme. For example, at-risk students are more likely to connect with themes that are attached to the workplace. Magnet schools, career academies, and career-tech programs are increasing in popularity and size. Career academies consist of a smaller number of students and are organized around several industries, including the health, business, and transportation industries. According to Hoachlander, Alt, & Beltranena (2001), "the results of students attending career academies include better attendance, lower dropout rates, the successful completion of more rigorous academic courses, and higher rates of postsecondary transition"(p. 21).

Students increase engagement and motivation during the learning process when their curriculum provides rewards such as belonging, gaining power, freedom, and fun. Teachers who provide their students with challenging, real-world learning do not have to waste time explaining why learning is useful. Teachers who engage the students' minds in the learning process are the motivating forces (Barkley, Bottoms, Feagin, & Clark, 2001).

Learning communities. Students that are involved in smaller learning environments are more likely to establish positive relationships with other students, teachers, and community members. Professional Learning Communities provide collaboration between administrators and teachers to evaluate the conditions and activities that have a positive influence on student learning, seek effective practices, and evaluate strategies and techniques. The following are common characteristics of successful Professional Learning Communities according to DuFour and Eaker (1998),

1. "Shared mission, vision, and values
2. Collective inquiry
3. Collaborative teams
4. Action orientation and experimentation
5. Continuous improvement
6. Results orientation" (p.3).

Student services. Students may benefit from special services that are created to assist students and keep them from dropping out of school. Some of these services include after-school tutoring, child-care for teen mothers, after school day-care to prevent latch-key students, and various language classes.

Many schools provide individual and group counseling services for students that struggle with drug, alcohol, physical, and mental abuse. Other services are available to help students and needy families that are experiencing financial problems.

Providing Focused, Sustained Professional Development (Strategy # 3)

The third strategy describes professional development as the most important process to implement school improvement strategies. The most effective professional development programs are organized and implemented, and information is disseminated to faculty members. Research according to Ball and Cohen (1999) states that professional development is most effective when placed within the teacher's practice and occurs when teachers are learning about their practice while they practice.

The problems with professional development procedures arise from time constraints and the power struggles among administrative and faculty members regarding the topics for professional development. When professional development is initiated by administrators, faculty members may reject the process and view this as another central office mandate.

Collaborative school culture. Maintaining an organizational effort to change teachers' habits while improving their teaching strategies and student learning requires communication. According to Elmore & Burney (1998), "professional development takes the form of activities designed to break down the isolation of principals and teachers" (p. 18).

According to Feist (2003), faculty members who participate in professional development want the following opportunities:

- Use right away or related to a current project;

- Has built-in follow-up procedures;
- Fits into their busy schedules;
- Matches their learning styles;
- Focuses on curriculum;
- Includes leadership or direction from the program chairperson; and
- Includes a support person to communicate with and answer questions (p.32).

Professional development program. Professional development should be planned and organized according to the school improvement mission statement and goals. According to (Levine, 2002) professional development will prepare new teachers, develop career faculty members, enhance educational reform, and promote student achievement. According to Hoachlander, Alt, and Beltranena (2001), professional development will be used as follows:

- Build consensus among faculty on the need for change and the direction it should take;
- Plan the reorganization of programs of study and a new curriculum;
- Design and implement major changes in the school-wide delivery of instruction;
- Strengthen teachers' abilities to understand and use the new curriculum and instructional practices; and create sufficient time for reflection on and modification of school improvement efforts (p. 24).

Teacher-driven professional development. Professional development should be organized, monitored, and delivered by teachers. The agenda should focus on providing

relevant information that can be used within the teacher's classroom. Teachers should be available as mentors for any teacher that needs assistance with resources, instructional strategies, discipline issues, and parent communication.

A RAND study assessed the impact of teacher-driven professional development programs. This study found students' achievement and test scores were consistently higher at schools with effective professional development programs organized by teachers, compared to schools with poorly organized administrative professional development programs (Gill & Hove, 2000).

Organizational and Management Practices (Strategy # 4)

The fourth strategy explains how organizational and management practices should be established to provide a positive working environment for teachers and learning environment for students. A safe and orderly learning environment permeated with mutual respect creates an educational environment that promotes academic success.

Site based decision making. Educators are borrowing ideas from the business world allowing those most affected by the issues and resources to have input into the decision-making process. One important practice is allowing those who work in the schools the opportunity to make decisions instead of administrators in the district's central office. Principals are responsible for managing school resources, but faculty members should be involved in the process. Principals who allow teachers the opportunity to manage their supply and material orders are very resourceful and thrifty

(Barth, 1981). In many school systems the district administration remains in control over curricula decisions, instructional spending, school schedules, calendars, teacher hiring, salaries, and collective bargaining. As school administrators face higher accountability many of these decisions are shifting to the schools (Barth, 1981).

A management practice that supports student learning is the use of flexible schedules that increase teaching and learning time. This is achieved by working with faculty members and limiting classroom disruptions during instructional times (Leithwood & Duke, 1993). Schools, that integrate several organizational changes, create whole-school reform and achieve higher student achievement. For example, some of these changes include flexible schedules with longer instructional time, common planning time for teachers, reducing class sizes, and placing students in community-service jobs (Miles & Darling-Hammond, 1998).

Organizational changes. Integrating organizational changes to create school improvement is a systemic and continuous process. Educators responsible for implementing new standards, should adhere to the following basic principals associated with change. According to Salsberry (2002),

> There must be motivation to get a change started. Generally, this occurs when small groups of people begin and build momentum. For major reforms groups will need to think big and start big using pressures and support as tools. Second, all shapes and sizes of change will need pressure and support at some point in the process. Pressure without support leads to resistance and alienation; support without pressure leads to drift or waste of resources. Third, schools need to

> carefully consider the relationships between changes in behavior and changes in beliefs. It is not uncommon for changes in behavior to precede changes in belief systems. It takes time and practice to develop the skills and understanding necessary for successful implementation of a new program or technique. Finally, the role of ownership is critical to any successful change. Just knowing about and supporting a particular change is not enough. Real ownership comes from a thorough understanding of the new process and being skilled at it. (p. 33)

Building Linkages (Strategy # 5)

Parental involvement. The fifth strategy discusses the importance of building linkages. Research demonstrates that positive parental and school relationships are an integral part of student achievement. Educators should work with parents to help them understand and support the school's mission, as well as serve on committees helping the school achieve the mission (Lezotte, 2004).

Schools that use a larger part of a community including parents, business organizations, and individuals prepare young people for life. Research shows that students learn more when parents are involved in their education (Horn & Chen, 1998). Employers' involvement with work-based instruction through cooperative education and supervised work experience, helps students understand the relevance of math, science, social studies, English, and elective courses in the curriculum (Stone, 1990). According to Hoachlander, Alt, & Beltranena (2001),

> School/business partnerships have grown in popularity during the last decade or two. Once mainly asked to advise on the design of vocational education programs, employers now are pursued for many reasons: "adopt-a-school" initiatives, formation or support of local education foundations, mentoring and job-shadowing programs, internships and work experience, and public support for higher standards and other school-improvement objectives. (p. 35)

Community involvement. Linkages are established with parents, community organizations, business, and schools by working together as partners to promote academic achievement and inclusive learning environments. Outreach activities such as open houses, newsletters, and workshops empower parents and partners to become involved in the student's education (Salsberry, 2002).

Monitoring and Accelerating Improvement (Strategy # 6)

The sixth strategy monitors and accelerates school improvement through assessment and accountability. Many educators are not trained to administer assessments and accountability effectively. According to Hoachlander, Alt, and Beltranena (2001), at least three issues require attention: "(1) understanding assessment, its strengths and its limitations; (2) knowing how to design and implement sound, data-driven evaluations to assess local school improvement; and (3) knowing how to transform traditional management-information systems from administrative record-keeping to accessible, useable systems for school improvement"(p. 36).

Assessment. Educational leaders are required to understand the assessment process, use data-driven evaluations to monitor school improvement, and transform administrative record-keeping systems for school improvement. Assessments are vital components to improve education. Faculty members will need to examine assessment results to identify problems and plan appropriate instructional interventions (Sharkey & Murnane, 2003).

When assessments are used appropriately, practices are eliminated that undermine the philosophy of educators and students being responsible for educational excellence. Schools that use data to make decisions are implementing positive practices from the business world; also, schools use data to guide decisions that relate directly to student achievement (Bass, 1981). When educators use data only to rank schools and students, they do not use their resource wisely. When teachers use testing results appropriately, their own classroom assessments will be more aligned with state standards (Guskey, 2003).

Using data for school improvement. According to Schmoker (2001):

> Successful organizations do not just collect data they revere it. They are not satisfied with data until data have life and meaning for every teacher, every pertinent party. They use data to create and to ensure an objective, commonly held reality. The use of data allows for organized, simplified discussions that merge to create focused priorities and productive action. (p. 51)

Data can be used by educators to improve student achievement results by focusing on a few simple specific goals. Data can be used to discover answers for two important questions Schmoker (2003):

1. “How many students are succeeding in the subjects I teach?
2. Within those subjects, what are the areas of strengths or weakness” (p.22)?

Answering the first question allows educators to establish higher annual improvement goals. For example, how can I increase the percentage of students passing an assessment baseline by five percentage points? Setting simple goals may be a significant part in the school improvement process.

The second question may be answered by faculty members who have identified strengths and weaknesses in at least the core subjects. The task of instructional improvement begins with a collaborative effort to share, produce, test, and refine instructional strategies aimed at the areas of low performance Schmoker (2003).

Leadership and the Practice of School Improvement

According to (Hoachlander, Alt, & Beltranena, 2001), “The reasons for slow progress are many and complex. One that is receiving growing attention is the need for stronger school leadership. We must develop the teachers, principals, superintendents, school board members and other educators who direct and implement changes in curriculum, instruction, and school organization” (p. i).

Understands student learning. Intrator (2004), believes the following approaches allow students to become deeply engaged in the learning process:

- Manipulate classroom pace between frenetically paced questions-and-answer discussion and long spans of quiet journaling time.
- Feed the need to create by allowing students the opportunity to express their originality. Students tuned in when they felt ownership over ideas expressed in class and felt they were in a safe place to share their own ideas. They yearned to be listened to and have their insights taken seriously.
- Share your personal presence through energized, expressive teaching that fosters energized learning; monotonous teaching sabotages attention.
- Knowing students as people by understanding their experiences, interests, aspirations, needs, fears, and idiosyncrasies (pp. 22-23).

An effective leader (teacher, principal, superintendent, or school board member) of school improvement according to (Hoachlander, Alt, & Beltranena, 2001), "(1) understands the elements that contribute to student learning; (2) can assemble these elements into workable, coherent instructional programs; and (3) can work with faculty and other stakeholders to implement these instructional programs in a fashion appropriately tailored to particular students and local circumstances" (p. 11).

Improving instructional programs. Improving instructional programs requires continuous planning by teachers along with having the following tools and resources Tanner, Bottoms, Feagin, & Bearman (2002):

- "Data on student achievement,
- Knowledge of curricular goals and objectives;
- Knowledge of course standards;

- An understanding of methods for assessing student progress;
- A repertoire of effective instructional strategies; and
- Good instructional materials" (p. 2).

Improving instructional programs must include the following five instructional planning strategies Tanner, Bottoms, Feagin, & Bearman (2002):

1. Good instructional planning begins with course standards that are aligned to state and/or national standards.
2. Good instructional planning begins with high expectations for all middle grades and high school students.
3. Good instructional planning explores ways to engage students in using knowledge and skills to solve problems and to develop and explore hypotheses.
4. Good instructional planning involves teachers' working together.
5. Good instructional planning requires that teachers need time to make informed decisions about instruction, analyze data, learn new instructional strategies, and develop integrated units of study. (pp. 2-3)

Manage and improve curriculum and instruction. An educational leader promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and professional development. According to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (1996) educational leaders facilitate processes and engage in activities ensuring that:

- Professional development promotes a focus on student learning consistent with the school vision and goals
- Barriers to student learning are identified, clarified, and addressed
- Diversity is considered in developing learning experiences
- Life long learning is encouraged and modeled
- Technologies are used in teaching and learning
- Multiple opportunities to learn are available to all students
- Curriculum decisions are based on research, expertise of teachers, and the recommendations of learned societies
- Student learning is assessed using a variety of techniques
- Multiple sources of information regarding performance are used by staff and students
- Pupil personnel programs are developed to meet the needs of students and their families. (p. 13)

Leadership and the change process. The educational leadership of any school organization is the most important facilitator for the implementation of school improvement strategies. According to Sarason (1996), “in the bulk of instances where the school improvement effort failed, and in the small number of instances where it succeeded, the principal was the key actor” (p.5). The principal should be skillful and persistent in communicating new directions and changes to all members of the organization. Another essential factor in educational leadership is the capacity to influence and organize change for the members of the organization. The principal who is

attuned to the big picture, a sophisticated conceptual thinker, transforms the organization through people and teams (Fullan, 2001).

The educational leadership that facilitates the implementation of school improvement strategies must have the following essential components: moral purpose, understanding of the change process, ability to improve relationships, creation of knowledge, sharing, and coherent plan (Fullan, 2001). Successful leaders do not mind when others disagree, in fact, doubters can have important points. Changing what people in the organization value and how they work together to accomplish it leads to deep, lasting change. Principals who are not attuned to leading in a culture of change make the mistake of seeking external innovations and taking on too many projects (Fullan, 2002).

> The challenges, most school districts encounter when changes and reforms are made, are a lack of leadership, frustration from faculty members, and those who believe the changes are made as a top-down mandate. The role of ownership is critical to all successful change. Just because faculty members support a particular change is not enough; real ownership comes from an understanding of the new process and possessing the authority and skills to implement it (Salsberry, 2002). When all participants are allowed to be involved in the decision-making process, commitment and cooperation for school improvement occur with all stakeholders (Armstrong, Benett, & Grenier, 1997; Bhola, 1991).

Educators are responsible for higher academic standards, increasing graduation requirements, and high-stakes testing being mandated in school districts across America. While these reforms are being debated by those within and outside the educational establishment, the outcomes and changes are unclear (Donlevy, 2000). The Elementary

and Secondary Education (ESEA) Act increased the funding for comprehensive reform for the fiscal federal budget from $265 million in 2001 to $310 million in 2002 (Sack, 2002). With federal aid available the number of schools that are reshaping themselves uses campus-wide models and external assistance that will quadruple over the next three years. According to Spady (2002), “Here we stand in 2002 at the same crossroads as our forbearers in 1983, having the opportunity to choose our approach to educational change” (p. 62). As Salsberry (2002) stated, “Dictated changes have a long history of failure, and changes that are not monitored and revised disappear in a very short time” (p.32).

Strong educational leadership is crucial to the implementation of school-wide reform. In many schools where reforms are failing, principals do not keep the faculty aligned to the program’s goals or basic precepts (Shafer, 1997). Teachers’ commitment to the reform is crucial in the implementation process. Many times teachers are overwhelmed with so many changes at once (Hendrie, 1999). Teachers feel threatened by change or view the reform as another program that will not last, and so, they are not committed to the effort (Safer, 1997).

Students resist reforms that change the curriculum. School leadership earns support for the design by communicating with students, parents, and community members (Hendrie, 1999). RAND researchers found that many principals and teachers believed they did not have the power or resources to implement the desired reforms. The design aligned the district’s accountability systems and state standards so that teachers did not have to deviate from the reform process (Glennan, 1998).

Schools’ reform efforts are more likely to be successful if they are school-based, whole school systemic, and school-based because every school is different. Any reform

should take into account the needs of the individual schools. The teachers and site administrators should have the authority to make decisions and implement the reforms. Whole-school reform should have a common culture and vision. If the reforms are departmentalized and the teachers remain isolated, students fall through the cracks. When school districts and state departments of education work together to support individual school reforms, the designs establish successful schools (Sabourin, 1992).

Mary Douglas

The theoretical framework for this study is built upon the work of Mary Douglas who was born in Italy in 1921. She studied anthropology at Oxford receiving her PhD in 1951. She is a retired professor of social anthropology at London University.

Douglas originally designed the grid/group framework to deal with cultural diversity in remote places observing rituals, symbols, witchcraft, food and drinking habits. Her aim was to show the relevance of anthropology for modern societies (Grid-group cultural theory website, 2004).

According to the grid-group cultural theory website (2004), the theory has the following three claims:

1. The main claim of grid-group cultural theory is that culture matters. Preferences and justification shape the world of social relations. Everything human beings do or want is culturally biased. Therefore this is a cultural theory.

2. The second claim is that it is possible to distinguish a limited number of cultural types. That can be done by constructing a typology of cultures. This typology includes viable combinations of patterns of social relations and patterns of cultural biases (or cosmologies). These combinations are often class (sub) cultures, ways of life or rationalities, sometimes ways of organizing social orders, solidarities, political cultures, or simply types.
3. The third claim is that the typology of viable combinations is universal. It can be applied anywhere, anytime because the two dimensions of social grasp the fundamental nature of the social being. Grid-group cultural theory postulates that people derive a great many of their preferences, perceptions, opinions, values, and norms from their adherence to a certain way of organizing social relations, which is revealed by their preference with regard to the two basic dimensions of social life; incorporation or bounded ness (group) and regulation or prescriptions (grid). Grid-analysts can therefore deduce preference, attitudes and behaviors regarding all kind of topics for each ideal type.

Douglas' work according to Spickard (1989) "is a sociological theory of the plausibility of different forms of religion, worldview, and ideology. She attempts to relate different varieties of belief to different types of society. Individuals in different social settings are biased towards different cosmologies. People do not believe what makes no sense to them, and what makes sense to them depends on their social environment" (p. 155). Through her research she explored the cognitive processes in cultures and societies seeking to discover the principles by which people view their world.

During the 1980s, Douglas developed a comparative method called grid/group to explore the relationship between the types of society and systems of symbolic classifications. Societies were classified into low group and high group categories, depending on how they viewed themselves as belonging to a surrounded social unit. Societies were also classified into low grid and high grid categories, depending on the degree of which social interactions are governed by rules (Southwest Missouri State University, 2004).

Through her typology researchers are allowed the opportunity to discover the sociological, conceptual, and methodological barriers in culture inquiry. Douglas' research (1982) identifies individuals where cultural and environmental factors affect the ability to make decisions. Harris (1995) explains the relationship between the individual and the social environment through grid and group. Grid and group describe the social life found in every social structure. This relationship is described by Douglas (1982), "use a grid for a dimension of individuation and group for a dimension of social incorporation" (p. 620).

Grid and group are beneficial for my study. Educators are surrounded by social life within their school cultures. Every school has a culture with unique roles and rules that are placed upon every individual in the organization. These factors influence the implementation of the six school improvement strategies.

Grid Dimension

Grid is represented on the vertical axis, and describes the way the people define the role and place of every individual within their culture. According to Chaffee and Tierney (1988) the individuals who participate in the organization are taken for granted. These assumptions are identified through stories, special language, norms, and artifacts. Deal and Peterson (1999) believe the school culture influences and shapes everything in school, "The way principals, teachers, and key people reinforce, nurture, or transform underlying norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions" (p.4). Societies that are high grid are classified as authoritarian, and each person has a specific and distinct role in society and is constrained by these roles (Lingenfelter, 1998). The more roles within this cultural structure, the higher the grid of the social group.

Low grid situations place more importance on individuals and are characterized by a competitive environment. According to Harris (1995), "for instance, in school organizations, freedom of choice is sometimes constrained by bureaucratic rules that regulate curriculum, teaching methods, and grading" (p. 620). If the school culture is strong, positive, and collaborative, it is influenced by many features within the school. Strong culture in schools is enhanced effectiveness, motivation, communication, productivity, and problem solving (Levine & Lezotte, 1990). An effective school has a culture that communicates high expectations and competition for students and faculty members, encourages excellence and academic effort, and creates a safe and respectful environment (Saphire & Kine, 1985).

Group Dimension

Group is represented on the horizontal axis, and describes a team made up of individuals. A group within this culture is defined as assumptions are discovered and developed by a group that copes with problems. These assumptions are taught to new members as the correct way to believe and feel while solving problems. Culture within this group is multidimensional and includes three levels; these levels are artifacts, values, and basic assumptions (Schein, 1999). High group cultures are tightly held together with privileges that are not available to those outside the group. According to Kuhn and Whitt (1988), culture is described as the lens through which organizational members interpret and make meaningful their involvement in a group. According to Harris (1995), "In high group social environments, there are specific membership criteria, explicit pressure to consider group relationships, and the survival of the group becomes more important than the survival of individual members within it" (p. 621).

According to (Barth, 2002), a school's culture is a pattern of norms, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, values, ceremonies, traditions, and myths that are deeply perceived in the very core of the organization. Low group societies are less concerned for the group, have few mutual interests, and do not participate in activities together (Lingenfelter, 1998). It is important to have an understanding of both the principals' and teachers' perceptions before the culture is placed on the continuum presented by Douglas. With the help of the grid and group matrix, school culture is placed on a continuum from low grid to high grid and from weak group to strong group.

Grid and Group Quadrants

Bureaucratic

Bureaucratic (high grid, low group) societies according to Harris (1995), "are often hierarchical environments, and the classifying criteria focus on such factors as race, gender, family heritage, or ancestry. Individual behavior is fully defined and with ambiguity. Cultural members have meaningful relationships and life-support networks outside of the group and little value is placed on group goals or survival" (p. 623).

Bureaucrats have innate and assorted relationships that perceive individuals to be monitored by isolated, impersonal powers (Southwest Missouri State University, 2004). In a bureaucratic society members are often insulated by various degrees of social separation between classes of people. Isolation from group identity is rewarded for non-conformity, because group loyalty hinders success. People are solely responsible to negotiate their own survival (Spickard, 1989).

Corporate

According to Harris (1995), corporate (high grid, high group) societies, social relationships, and experiences are influenced by boundaries maintained by the group against outsiders. Individual identification is heavily derived from group membership. Individual behavior is subject to controls exercised in the name of the group. Roles are

hierarchical; at the top of the hierarchy, roles have unique value and power (generally limited to a small number of experts). There are many role distinctions at the middle and bottom rungs. Perpetuation of traditions and group survival is of utmost importance. (pp. 623-625)

Corporate societies are large scale, group-focused; they justify their morality as natural laws, and practice divine sacrifice (Southwest Missouri State University, 2004). According to Spickard (1989), "bureaucracies think in terms of generations when weighing risks and benefits. They think planning can manage whatever crises emerge. More threatening in the minds of bureaucrats is outside disturbances against which planning is impossible: wars and popular elections" (p. 167).

Individualists

Individualists (low grid, low group) according to Harris (1995), "relationships and experiences of the individual are not constrained by imposed formal rules or traditions. Role status and rewards are competitive and are contingent on existing, temporal standards. The emphasis on social distinction among individuals is submerged, there are a few insider-outsider screens, and little value is placed on long-term corporate survival" (p. 623).

Individualists societies are unusual, innovative, have high standards, and emphasize competition (Southwest Missouri State University, 2004). In these market societies according to Spickard (1989), "benefit is gained by individual risk-taking, and

short-term results are favored. Individuals are dependent on themselves alone and must be willing to pay the price for their failure in order to claim the benefits of success. As a result, these individuals can tolerate a good deal of environmental risk, and there is little concern for long-term difficulties. After all, the individuals reaping the benefits will not be alive when the payments come due" (p. 167).

Collectivists

Collectivists (low grid, high group) have a few communal characteristics. According to Harris (1995) "role status is competitive, yet because of the strong group influence, rules for status definitions and placement are more stable than in weak group societies. The perpetuation of corporate goals and group survival are highly valued" (p. 624).

Collectivist's societies are smaller, filled with splintered group conflict, visibly separate from outsiders, and view nature as loving and dangerous (Southwest Missouri State University, 2004). Organizations formed around a specific issue may include Greenpeace, The American Red Cross, and the local Christian School (Spickard, 1989).

Mary Douglas' Typology of Social Environment

Bureaucratic	***Grid +***	**Corporate**
Role ascribe status		Achieve role status
Low competition and allegiance to group		Low competition and high allegiance to group
(high grid, low group)		(high grid, high group)
Group –		**Group +**
Individualist		**Collectivist**
Individual moderate competition for role status		Moderate competition for role status
No insider-outsider roles		Strict insider-outsider rules
Low to moderate allegiance to group		Moderate to high allegiance to group
(low grid, low group)		(low grid, high group)
	Grid -	

Schools as Social and Cultural Environments

Schools as Social Environments

School cultures are constructed of perceptions and actions which are integrated into a cohesive social system. Mary Douglas' grid and group framework contributes to social systems theory by providing four classifications multicolored conception of social life within particular social systems. According to Harris (1995), "social construction, pedagogy, and educational competences are culturally specific and must be considered

within the structure of social relationships which produce these specified competencies" (p. 641).

Schools as Organizational Cultures

School cultures can operate as other organizational systems. They import resources from the outside, create a transformation process, and export the transformed products to other organizations (Bergquist, 1998). Realistically schools operate in an imperfect world. There are about 20,000 independent school districts in the United States, and each with various conditions and traditions. Even with unanimous agreement and commitment, the complexity of the educational or transformational process will produce variation in outcomes (Sarason, 1996).

Social relationships and representative traditions are important issues when describing schools as organizational cultures. According to Harris (1995), "a focus on individual and group relationships is vital. Values and practices relating to educational objectives, group vision, service and responsibility, and the communal aspect of a school are inextricably linked to the order of social relations, personal identity, and educational practices" (p. 644).

Summary

The purpose of this study explains how organizational culture affects the implementation of the six school improvement strategies in two schools. Douglas'

Typology of Grid and Group explains the interrelationship of culture and the practice of (1) raising the bar with higher expectations, (2) increasing student engagement and motivation (3) providing focused, sustained professional development, (4) using organizational and management practices (5) building linkages, (6) monitoring and accelerating improvement (Hoachlander, et al., 2001). The focus of this research is on the teachers' and principals' perceptions of implementing these six leadership strategies, improving instructional strategies, and raising student achievement. For the purpose of this study, educational leadership is limited to principals and teachers.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

This case study explains how organizational culture affects the implementation of six leadership strategies. This study is predicated on the use of qualitative methodology and has built a basis to support the conclusions of the researcher. Crabtree and Miller (1992) suggest, "qualitative research, by its nature, is designed to look for categories within a culture to help explain how the culture views the world around it" (p. 6). Qualitative research looks at real life situations as they are constructed and makes allowances for categories and themes to develop and emerge throughout the data collection process (Woods, 1999).

The primary source for gathering and analyzing data is the researcher who responds to the context, processes data, clarifies, and summarizes as the study evolves (Merriam, 1988). A qualitative researcher is someone who describes, compares, and creates for the reader the sense of being a part of the particular culture being studied (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). These experiences and perceptions are analyzed to form a description for the specific case study.

Case Study Sites

The research includes two public high schools, which are within the same district located in a suburban area in the southwestern part of the United States. Public High School A, hereafter referred to as PHS A and Public High School B, hereafter referred to as PHS B, have been implementing the HSTW strategies for approximately ten years. Both school sites continue the process of implementing leadership strategies described in the SREB document, *Leading School Improvement: What Research Says* (Hoachlander, Alt, & Beltranena, 2001). The research seeks to clarify the role of educational leadership, the school's culture, and the practice of these strategies.

My choices of PHS A and PHS B for this case study was to understand a phenomenon that is present in these two settings. PHS A and PHS B are schools with proven results in the implementation of school improvement and student achievement. As a full-time employee, doctoral candidate, and former teacher at PHS A, having both schools in my community provided a convenient location making it suitable for my research (Merriam, 1998).

Both schools are located within a district that is respected and studied for its progressive educational programs and high student achievement. Both sites have been selected as HSTW school improvement sites and have provided professional development and training for administrators and faculty members for several years.

Data Collection Procedures

I was the primary person for collecting ongoing data. I continually observed people and events, engaged in participant interviews, and examined various documents relevant to the phenomenon under study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

The study was presented to the principals in each high school, and approval from the assistant superintendent was received through a letter and telephone call on September 3, 2003. Teachers and principals, respondents of the study, were contacted by telephone and email to participate in the research. I met with the participants to explain the research project and deliver information about the study. Prior to the collection of data the Institutional Review Board (IRB) granted permission after the University's approval of the research proposal. The IRB procedures were followed before every interview as all participants signed consent forms (see Appendix A), and were given a pseudonym for confidentiality purposes.

Both administrators agreed to be interviewed and recommended other faculty members for additional interviews. The participants interviewed in this case study included twenty faculty members, one principal, and assistant principal who are employees at PHS A and PHS B. Interviews were conducted in both PHS A and PHS B between October 21, 2003, and August 11, 2004. The researcher, the administrators, and the faculty members in each high school agreed that the decision to participate in this study was voluntary. Information taken from the interviews, observations, and documents was recorded in such a manner that subjects could not be directly identified.

Interviews at the most basic levels are conversations and may be the most important data collection technique for the qualitative researcher (Kvale, 1996). Every qualitative interview was a one-on-one conversation to gain insight and participant perceptions on each topic. The purpose of an interview was to find out what is on the participant's mind or how they feel about a phenomenon (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). The interview was used to emphasize intellectual understanding instead of promoting change (Kvale, 1996).

Qualitative interviews share the following three characteristics according to Rubin and Rubin (1995):

1. Qualitative interviews are modifications or extensions of ordinary conversations with important distinctions.
2. Qualitative interviewers are more interested in the understanding, knowledge, and insights of the interviewees than in categorizing people or events in terms of academic theories.
3. The content of the interview, as well as the flow ad choice of topics, changes to match what the individual interviewee knows and feels. (p. 6)

I promised confidentiality throughout the interview and allowed all participants to stop at any time. I patterned my interviews and integrated the three characteristics that were previously mentioned during the interviews.

First, I allowed ordinary conversations to be extended. I asked the questions listed (see Appendix D) and allowed the interviewee to take control of the conversation. I became the listener seeking clarification by allowing the respondent to create a thick description. This allowed the interviewee to relax, develop trust, and add new thoughts or

ideas to the topic. Second, the interviews encouraged me to develop understanding, knowledge, and insight of the interviewees. I learned that metaphors probably have different meanings for each interviewee. I could not assume that all interviewees would have the same definition for each word. Finally, during the interview the flow and choice of topics evolved to match the interviewee's knowledge and feelings. I developed empathy with the interviewee during the interview leading to a conversational partnership (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

The interviews were tape recorded using grand tour questions (see Appendix D) and probing questions throughout the interview. Tape recordings were transcribed exactly as they appeared on the tape by a paid transcriber using a rich text document Microsoft Note Pad. The tapes were placed under lock and key in the researcher's office. After reading the transcriptions, all respondents were provided a transcript for member checks.

In addition to the interviews, questionnaires are also used in survey research. Questionnaires were designed asking respondents identical questions and answers were placed in categories that were pre-designed and placed within the quadrants of Douglas' (1982) grid and group theory. When these answers and concepts were tallied, I discovered trends and relationships through statistical analysis (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The questionnaires were one of the most reliable sources of collecting data in a simple, organized, and timely manner (Anderson, 1998). The questionnaire (see Appendix F) used grid and group questions from previous research studies combined with current literature in the areas that represented the cultures of these schools.

Following approval from each high school administrator, a letter of introduction and the questionnaires were delivered on September 3, 2003, for the faculty members in

PHS A and PHS B. At my request both principals sent a second email as a reminder on September 17, 2003 to their participating faculty members. In an effort to increase the return rate, I attached a dollar bill to seventy new questionnaires and delivered thirty five to each school on September 19, 2003. The assistant principals in both schools were willing to assist me in the delivery and collection of the questionnaires. A total of 72 out of 92 (78%) of PHS A faculty members answered the questionnaire, while 41 out of 99 (41%) PHS B faculty members answered the questionnaire. The questionnaires were presented to the participants before the interviews were completed. The information obtained from these questionnaires allowed me to have a better understanding of the participants view of the culture and leadership within their schools.

To learn more about the culture, I used the opportunities for periods of personal observation (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Arrangements for observations were made during interviews, telephone conversations, and email. During observations in PHS A and PHS B, the principal and faculty members introduced me to participants. Being a part of the school community offered insight to the cultural perspectives in each school. I took notes during observations, and the field notes were placed in folders.

I was allowed access to visit the hallways, offices, classrooms, cafeterias, and libraries. I also observed artifacts such as bulletin boards, trophy cases, yearbooks, and websites. After my observations I wrote field notes to support or refute the interviews and questionnaires. Hopefully, as the researcher observing the setting, I wanted to validate the findings and gather new evidence (Anderson, 1998). According to Woods (1999), "Information learned at interviews is reinforced, and perhaps modified, by observation, and by study of documents or more interviews" (p. 4).

Throughout this study I was the primary researcher for gathering data. Interviews, questionnaires, observations, and field notes were the primary documents collected. I also collected meeting agendas, journal articles, evaluation reports, and brochures (Miles & Hubermann, 1994). I used physical artifacts to provide more information and insight about the people, organization, and culture (Anderson, 1998). During the case study my efforts in the collection of the following documents allowed me to create a comprehensive picture with the following: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation, and physical artifacts (Yin, 1989). Another data tool allowed me instant access to valuable information from the districts web site and each high school. During the interviews the participants were asked if they would be willing to provide any other documentation that would contribute to my study.

Trustworthiness Criteria

A major qualitative research issue is the concept of being trustworthy. Trustworthiness and authenticity establish the credibility of the study. Trustworthiness was developed through the following criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirm ability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

While seeking credibility I will reconstruct the respondents' views of their world allowing the respondents the opportunity to verify the data. To better ensure credibility the researcher should include as many of the following techniques as shown in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1

Summary of Techniques to Ascertain Trustworthiness

Techniques	Definitions	Activities
1. Prolonged engagement	Building relationships and trust with participants, and learning about the culture (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993).	I sent frequent emails, made phone calls and visits to the participants to establish relationships and trust.
2. Persistent observations	In the field, the researcher made significant decisions about the relevance of the study, and verified what should be in focus (Cresswell, 1998).	The observations helped me identify the items that were relevant in the study and prevented a misleading picture of the culture.
3. Peer debriefing	Provided an external check of the research process (Erlandson, et al., 1993).	I asked my peers who were doctoral candidates for constructive criticism.
4. Negative analysis	The researcher refined the initial hypothesis until all cases completed the puzzle and all outliers were eliminated (Cresswell, 1998).	I attempted to research and understand any outliers that were in opposition to my study.

Table 3.1 (continued)

Techniques	Definitions	Activities
5. Progressive subjectivity	The reader will understand the researcher's position and any assumptions that impact the research (Merriam, 1988).	I was careful during the interviews and observations to examine my developing expectations.
6. Member checks	According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), "this is the most critical technique for establishing creditability" (p. 314).	I gave each of the interviewees the opportunity to verify the transcripts during the collection and analysis procedures.

To ensure transferability, I established a thick description. According to Anderson (1998), a thick description is, "a term frequently used in qualitative research to describe data that offer a complete description of a phenomenon" (p. 256). According to Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen (1993), a thick description developed by the researcher allows the readers to determine whether the findings can be transferred "because of shared characteristics" (p. 32). I tried to provide a thick description by analyzing and reporting my findings. Hopefully, the readers will be able to transfer my findings to their own environments when appropriate.

Confirmability is the fourth element used to establish trustworthiness and is the qualitative equivalent with the quantitative term, objectivity. The researcher plays an important role because interpretation is vital in a case study (Cresswell, 1998).

I realized it was important to search for the junction of information using a process referred to as the triangulation of information. During the data collection process, multiple sources of data were used to develop the case study (Cresswell, 1998). Interviews, observations, artifacts, and questionnaires were used as information to achieve my objectives of providing interpretations, and final outcomes which actually reflected the culture and participant's views of the school sites observed.

Pragmatics of the Study

During the case study, I used a variety of methodologies including observation, questionnaires, interviews, artifacts, documents, and websites. One concern was the validity and reliability of the data collected. When I used a variety of measures to collect data, this enhanced the conclusion as being valid. This process is called triangulation (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

The sites, PHS A and PHS B, have been selected as HSTW school improvement sites and have implemented the six leadership strategies for several years. The school district has been respected for its progressive educational programs and high student achievement. Even though both schools are within the same district, their cultures and educational leaders are unique as they seek to implement the six leadership strategies. Access to these schools was granted by the assistant superintendent and principals, all holding doctoral degrees and respecting the research process.

The Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A) granted permission to collect data after the research proposal was approved by the university. The consent form signed

by every participant provides in detail the procedure, duration, confidentiality, discomfort, and benefits. All participants understood the study was voluntary, there was no penalty for refusal to participate, and they could withdraw at any time without penalty.

For the most part, I selected respondents with a variety of educational experiences and certificates as the participants to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon of interest. However, I also sought unique respondents that would provide an anomaly to the phenomenon under research.

Data Analysis

The data analysis procedures can be some of the most important aspects in this study. Data analysis involves finding themes and concepts that may be hidden throughout the interviews. These themes are integrated into broader theoretical explanations for understanding of what was found in the final stages to produce the final report (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). According to Anderson (1998):

> Basically data analysis involves the following elements: interpreting your findings while in the field, coding and organizing the data into themes and constructs, searching for disproving themes or evidence , and testing alternative interpretation of the data to see if your understanding of the information changes. As well, analysis involves a great deal of contemplation, reflection, imagination, and experience. (pp. 157-158)

Interpreting your Findings While in Field

I found myself making judgments and interpreting the data as I continued the process of interviewing, observing, and collecting questionnaires and documents during the early stages of data collection. After each interview, I planned different strategies for collecting data during the next interview session (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Observations allowed me the opportunity to verify and provide insight to my research questions. Often during the interviews the participants discussed the importance of implementing these strategies, but the observations occasionally provided a different perception. On one occasion during an observation of advisory, I observed a teacher positively interacting and assisting students in the completion of their pre-enrollment schedules for the next school year, even though I discovered through conversation with the counselor that most teachers disliked this activity and said it was the counselor's job.

While collecting the questionnaires I found that some participants would write a few notes in the margins. I used this information as additional sources of data added to my research. Unfortunately, some of the comments were due to personal frustration and written for the participants' pleasure. I investigated and did a follow up on some of the comments during the interview process.

Various documents containing useful information were collected during the interviewing process. Most of these documents presented a positive pictures and facts about each school similar to a menu at a restaurant. The district administrators gave me data, statistics, and information that promoted their district.

Coding and Organizing the Data into Themes and Constructs

The analysis process began first by reading all of the collected data to provide an overview. I made notes and summaries to begin the sorting process. Metaphors and tables were used to prioritize the significant amount of data. Finally, the data were counted and frequency codes were established to determine how often the data were used (Cresswell, 1998).

After completing the interviews, I paid a person to create transcripts for each interview. After reading through the interviews and field notes several times, I made notes in the margins and used different colored highlighters to identify words, phrases, and sentences that related to the implementation of the school improvement strategies. I was overwhelmed by the amount of highlighted data and I took a break from this process for a few days.

For each transcript, I created a folder and listed categories and commonalities that developed from the data. I counted the number of occurrences of commonalities from the listed categories and through this process several themes emerged. I slowly discovered the relationships of the themes among the data, the literature, and grid and group framework by additional readings and research in each area. This allowed me the opportunity to produce a list of major and minor themes.

I placed notes, documents, and artifacts into folders according to PHS A and PHS B. I reviewed notes and analyzed the documents and artifacts as they were gathered. I

also used different colored highlighters to correlate the same coding scheme within the documents and artifacts as the interview data.

One organizational tool employed after collecting the data was storing it in large envelopes. For example, the envelopes were marked as Mary Douglas, organizational culture, leadership strategies, and miscellaneous. Throughout the analyzing process I found additional literature within these envelopes similar to puzzle pieces that helped organize and arrive at the results. I followed this process using Douglas' (1982) grid and group typology as a lens for initial coding categories, sorting data, and assisting in conceptualizing themes. I also re-examined emerging themes to determine suitability and theoretical significance.

Searching for Disproving Themes or Evidence

Throughout the data analysis process data were examined by pulling out the concepts and themes that described the interviewee's culture and building toward an overall explanation (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). After each participant completed his/her questionnaire, answers were calculated and recorded for each high school. Negative and positive frequency counts were performed on answers to each question. The completed questionnaires from PHS A were examined separately from PHS B questionnaires, but each in relation to Douglas' (1982) grid and group typology.

The questionnaire responses provided insight into the cultural context of each high school, even though both schools are within the same district. After tallying the

responses the high schools had different averages but were located within the same cultural quadrants. PHS A and PHS B were placed in the corporate quadrant in accordance with their questionnaire responses. Data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis reinforced each high school's placement in its respective quadrants of cultural bias.

Summary

While interpreting the data, I found that hunches and intuition are part of the interpretation process. As a researcher I must step back and look at the whole process and form a larger picture of what is going on at each research site (Cresswell, 1998). I present my data and findings with the theoretical framework of Mary Douglas and relevant literature in chapter four.

The research was conducted in two public schools using the theoretical framework of Mary Douglas which explains the pattern of academic strategies useful to promote the ideas and values that surround the culture. Douglas' theory was beneficial to my research because teachers and principals are bound by social situations where cultural norms and traditions are expected to be followed. Even though both schools were in the same suburban setting in the southwestern part of the United States, the organizational and cultural settings and leadership qualities were different.

CHAPTER IV

Presentation of Cases

The presentation of cases includes the participants' interviews, participants' statements regarding the positives and negatives of the HSTW program and the educational leadership strategies. Participants were observed in their respective classrooms and overall school surroundings.

Procedures

Throughout this case study data were collected within each school. During the interviewing process the focus was on the practice of the leadership strategies and the culture in each school. A total of 20 faculty members, one principal and an assistant principal were interviewed. Additional data were collected by observing the daily lives of teachers, students, and administrators; reviewing various documents and artifacts, and distributing and collecting completed questionnaires. Additional information was obtained by collecting state department of education reports, reviewing HSTW documents, and receiving copies of both schools' site improvement plan.

Several questionnaires from both school sites provided the opportunity to evaluate the schools' cultures according to the grid and group make-up of each school. The questionnaires were scored, plotted, and charted showing the social culture placement in which each school site was operating.

The case study concluded with a brief description of each school's position in the Mary Douglas' grid and group framework. The data collected through interviews, observations, documents, and questionnaires from PHS A and PHS B are presented in this chapter as two case studies.

To present a view of the findings that emerged in the study, a description of the school district's characteristics, demographics, and historical information about each school site is provided. Following this description, the participants were introduced using pseudonyms along with their personal and professional background information.

Finally, the views of the participants and themes that emerged are presented by describing the relationship of each school's culture and the practice of the six leadership strategies. Mary Douglas' typology provided a lens to create a thick description and enhance the reader's understanding.

School District Information

"The mission of this district is to prepare students to be responsible citizens and lifelong learners."

The district's information was obtained from historical documents, brochures, observations, the district's web site, and from the State Department of Education. The

district has been providing a high quality education for families living in this suburban city in the southern plains for more than 90 years. The following highlights are the trademarks for this successful school district:

General Information

- Five of the schools within the district have been named Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Recognized by Money magazine as one of the Nation's "100 Top Schools in Towns You Can Afford."
- During the last decade, selected as one of the top school systems in the nation which recognizes districts having the characteristics parents desire most.
- 49 district teachers have earned National Board Certification.
- More than 30 percent of the teachers have advanced degrees.

Academic Information

- There have been 90 Academic All-State students in 18 years, 187 National Merit Finalists in the last 19 years, one of the highest totals in this state.
- ACT scores are above state and national averages.

Technology Information

- A fiber-optic district wide computer network that links computers in every classroom.
- A computer in each classroom offering internet access, e-mail, and attendance and grade book software.

Community Information

- There are more than 11,000 PTA members and 150,000 hours volunteered by community members in this district every year.
- A strong history of supporting school bond elections, and there are more than 250 formal partnerships with local businesses through the Partners in Educational program.

Facts

- Enrollment of 19,365 including 8,966 elementary, 4,343 middle school, and 6,056 high school students.
- There are 18 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, 3 high schools, and 1 alternative high school.
- The district hired 1,960 full-time employees, 1,311 full-time certified personnel, and 649 support employees.

- The average elementary class size was 21.2 students and the average middle school class size was 26 students.
- The General Fund Budget was $90,391,237, Building Fund Budget was $4,699,477, and the Child Nutrition Fund Budget was $5,570,300.

Case One: Public High School A (PHS A)

PHS A opened in 1968 in the suburb of a southern plains city as the enrollment continued to increase at PHS A. This growth was linked to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s when integration became law and white flight led to the school becoming overcrowded. In 1968, PHS A's first year enrollment began with sophomores and juniors who lived in the district with 850 students, and 39 faculty members. Students chose their mascot, school colors, and immediately established their traditions which were in competition with their sister school PHS B.

Today, the enrollment of 1,747 students is divided into the following ethnic categories 3 percent Asian, 18 percent Black, 64 percent Caucasians, 10 percent Hispanic, and 5 percent Native American. Approximately 37 percent of the student body is eligible for the free or reduced lunch programs. There are 92 full time faculty members with an average teaching experience of 11 years.

Facilities

The faculty parking lots are located on the east side of the school. Faculty members enter and exit through the main office. Across the hall was the faculty workroom containing mailboxes, restrooms, and a copy machine. The library was accessible by faculty members walking through the workroom. The glass windows in the library provided a view of the courtyard to one browsing through the books on the shelves.

The student parking lot was located on the west side of the school. Two campus police officers monitored the traffic flow and speed. The gates were closed during school hours to prevent students from leaving the campus without checking out.

Pictures, academic plaques, and athletic trophies were neatly placed in glass cases in the hallways. The hallways, classrooms, library, and cafeteria were neat and clean. Several shaded glass globes were attached to the hallway ceilings. There were 64 security cameras located throughout the hallways. School safety was a district priority, and the cameras and hallways were monitored by the school resource officers. The faculty and staff members were friendly and courteous during my visits and observations.

The main school building, a two-story brick structure, has been remodeled through several previous bond issues. Some of the improvements included a new weight room, girls' locker room, aerobics room, concession stand, public restroom, and new student desks scattered in several classrooms.

The cafeteria was located in the center of the main building where breakfast and lunch were served daily. The students were offered several different food selections. A

courtyard decorated with bricks, trees, and flowers was surrounded by the cafeteria and library located near the center of the school. Students had the opportunity to sit outside during lunch or enjoy the outdoors.

The school had two gymnasiums and an auditorium located across the hall from each other. Several banners were hanging in the gym displaying athletic accomplishments. The large gym was the setting for varsity events and pep assemblies; a smaller gym located through another door was used for various athletic practices. The darkened auditorium had a large stage and enough seating for the entire student body to attend plays, assemblies, and senior baccalaureate. Next to the auditorium, was another wing that had lockers, classrooms, and offices located on the northwest side of the main building. This wing of the building was created to meet the needs of the freshman students.

The neatly groomed baseball, football, and softball fields were located on the south side of the students' parking lot. A concession stand, small building for equipment storage, and lights adorned the area for night time sporting events.

A marquee was located on the north side of the building. It was highly visible for parents, patrons, and students. Student council members were in charge of updating the marquee with school activities and announcements.

The school, built in 1968, was located in a safe and clean middle-class neighborhood. The single family homes surrounding the school were built approximately 50 years ago. A large city lake, located on the west side of the school, is hidden from view by large oak trees.

Public High School A (PHS A) Participants

Paula Milton, Assistant Principal (6-2-04). Paula always had a positive greeting on the telephone or in person. She was the administrator responsible for facilitating school improvement issues. The other assistant principals were responsible for handling student discipline issues. Paula, dressed in professional attire, displayed a positive attitude and was always willing to provide information and documentation for my research.

Paula is 51 years old and has been in education for 15 years. She worked previously for nine years at another high school teaching math, healthful living, and English, before accepting the assistant principal's position at PHS A, where she has been employed for the past six years. She believed the best part of working at PHS A was that everyone works together to make the school a success. I noticed a bull horn, which became her trademark, sitting on her desk. She carried the bull horn around during lunch and hall duty and while coordinating fire drills.

She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Math Education, and Master's Degrees in Math and Administration from the same state university. Mrs. Milton is currently working on a Doctorate Degree from a state university.

Larry Adams, Teacher (11-11-03). Larry was extremely friendly and always willing to assist me. Larry, knowledgeable in technology, was in charge of the technology cluster and the school organization called Technology Students of America (TSA). He spends extra time taking tickets at school events. Some of his students were building balsa wood towers and robot projects.

Larry is 46 years old and has taught technology for 12 years at PHS A. He earned his Bachelor's Degree from a state university in Industrial Arts Education.

Robin Cobb, Teacher (2-11-04). Robin has a soft spoken demeanor, and a big smile. The walls in her room are filled with motivational posters for her students to view.

Robin is 47 years old and has been in education for nine years. She has taught credit recovery and special education for six years at PHS A. She is also certified in middle school English. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Special Education from a state university.

Dallas Cox, Teacher (11-19-03). Dallas' organizational skills are evident by the shelves in her classroom filled with three ring notebooks, sign up sheets, and desk calendars. The student mentors were planning their schedules and activities. The next scheduled event was reading to elementary students at a local elementary school.

Dallas is 48 years old. She has been an educator for 12 years. She has taught ACT Prep, mentoring at PHS A for five years, and is also the North Central Accreditation steering committee chairperson. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Letters from a state university.

Linda Douglas, Teacher (2-4-04). Linda's high energy level and positive attitude are an attraction and motivational tool for her students. Her friendly smile was a perfect compliment for her business work ethic. Linda is the Business Marketing Cluster chairperson. Her students were decorating their DECA hallway showcase and preparing for a future fashion show.

Linda is 45 years old and has been in education for 20 years. She has taught marketing and business management at PHS A for 15 years. She earned her Bachelor's

Degree in Home Economics and Fashion from a state university. She earned her Master's Degree in Secondary Education/Marketing Education from a state university.

Chris Harold, Teacher (10-8-03). Chris is very analytical and plain-spoken. He is 43 years old. Several students were working in the new computer lab that Chris created for them. Chris was responsible for creating a contextual geometry curriculum that allows at-risk students to earn a math credit.

Chris is the lead teacher in the engineering and math clusters. He has taught computer science and math for 17 years at PHS A. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics Education from a state university.

Corrine Joslin, Teacher (5-21-04). Corrine's warm personality, friendly smile, and interesting hands-on lab experiments that are evident around the room made her very popular with her students. This winning combination created a learning environment where students felt accepted and safe.

Corrine is 32 years old and has taught science for ten years at PHS A. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Science Education, and her Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from the same private university.

Brenda Lynn, Teacher (11-12-03). Brenda has excellent organizational skills and a student friendly attitude that compliment her friendly smile. Her passion for teaching science was evident with numerous plants and the sound of an aquarium pump coming from the corner of the room. Brenda was the lead teacher for the science cluster and coordinator for the HSTW program.

Brenda is 27 years old, and has taught science at PHS A for three years. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Science Education from a state university

Nick Mann, Teacher (3-10-04). Nick, a former college basketball player, has an optimistic outlook on everything. Nick's enthusiasm was respected because of his relationships with the students in the classroom and with the players on the basketball court.

Nick is 38 years old and has been in education for 14 years. He has taught science at PHS A for seven years. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education, and his Master's Degree in Secondary Education from the same state university. During this study he accepted an athletic director's position in another district.

Harry Nile, Teacher (12-4-03). Harry's blunt personality matched his flattop haircut and wire-rimmed glasses. He seemed very honest and, also frustrated during the interview session. Harry Mr. Nile was responsible for coordinating advisory time for faculty members and students. Advisory time was held weekly to disseminate academic and career information and to establish student and teacher relationships. Harry perceived he was not supported by faculty members and administrators while planning advisory time thus leading to his frustration and negative attitude. He has a passion for teaching and high expectations for students.

Harry is 43 years old and has been in education for 16 years. He has taught AP American History and Ancient World History at PHS A for 11 years. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Educational History from a state university.

Tonya Simes, Teacher (11-05-03). Tonya was born in India, and moved to America as a young girl. She portrayed an innocent and youthful demeanor which allowed her the opportunity to relate to her students and be an active lead teacher for the

health cluster. The students were planning a field trip to a local hospital to watch a knee surgery and discussing where they wanted to stop and eat lunch.

Tonya is 27 years old and has taught science all three years at PHS A. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Science Education from a state university.

Mission Statement

"The goal of the educational process at Public High School A is to provide shared learning environments that facilitate all students' success in divergent fields of study, leading to positive integration into an evolving society."

Paula Milton is the facilitator for the school improvement committee that meets monthly or when the need arises. The meetings are held in the library after school. Members of the committee included the professional development chairperson, activities director, athletic director, student council sponsor, career cluster lead teachers, and the HSTW coordinator.

Paula was responsible for the creation of an agenda with input and discussion from each member of the committee. During observations of the committee meetings most of the committee members were present. If the chairperson were unable to attend the monthly meeting, a subcommittee member represented the chairperson. At the meeting all members of the committee presented updates regarding their area of interest. The HSTW coordinator gave updates about any upcoming HSTW workshops or conferences, activities or fieldtrips planned by the clusters and updates on the progress of the freshman academies. Most of the discussion focused on planning the end-of-

instruction testing dates, strategies, and schedules for improving instructional strategies in the testing areas of Algebra I, American History, Biology I, and English II. Refreshments such as tea, cookies, and chips were served. Notes were taken, minutes, agendas, and other documents were collected while observing the meetings. Most of the agenda focused on aligning Priority Academic Student Skills hereafter referred to as (PASS) with the curriculum, raising end-of-instruction and API scores, and updates concerning NCLB with limited time devoted to the HSTW program and the six leadership strategies.

After the meetings the members of the school improvement committee took their agenda items and goals back to their subcommittees. The subcommittees met prior to the next monthly school improvement meeting in the chairperson's classroom usually held after school and lasting approximately 45 minutes. Many times during the subcommittee meetings the chairperson presented the goal and delegated the tasks to several different committee members.

The school improvement committee developed the following five-year school improvement plan (SIP):

- Set high expectations for all students.
- Connected career and technical studies to real life.
- Connected college prep to real life.
- Aligned school-based and work-based learning.
- Involved each student and her/his parent in career guidance and individualized advising systems.
- Provided a structured system of extra help for all students.

Goals and Resulting Themes

Throughout the collection of data, documents, and observations, but, particularly, in the interviews and questionnaires, the implementation of the six leadership strategies and interrelationship of the school's culture were discussed. I examined each strategy separately according to the interviews and the questionnaires that were scored, plotted, and charted, and according to the grid and group make-up of the school showing the social culture placement in which the school site was operating.

High Schools That Work (HSTW)

The HSTW school improvement model was evaluated empirically on the evidence of positive effects on student achievement by the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program. The HSTW model was the most highly rated in both evidence of positive effects on student achievement and on the level of support the developer provides schools (Herman, Aladjern, McMahon, Masem, Mulligan, O'Malley, Quinones, Reeve, & Woodruff, 1999).

The administrators and teachers in PHS A were asked to describe how the HSTW program is implemented in their school. Paula Milton, an Assistant Principal, who was asked about the HSTW program stated, "I was not here initially. My first year, the school was going from *Schools to Work*, to *High Schools That Work*." Paula who was in charge of the school improvement committee continued:

> I think it's just a great program. I don't see us as strong as we once were, about three years ago. The focus is so much on API and improving test scores, and we are working with test scores and working with PASS, incorporating *High Schools that Work*, but we are focusing on test scores.

Brenda Lynn, the coordinator for HSTW stated, "This has only been my third year here, so I'm not sure what the background is. Actually, to be honest, I didn't even know what *High Schools That Work* was until about last year, because lots of time it was confusing to us especially as a new teacher." Brenda continued to discuss her role as the chairperson:

> As far as the practicing the *High School That Work* instructional strategies and stuff, we really do try to implement. One of the ways that we try to implement *High Schools That Work* is we've used a lot data accumulated from the surveys and from the High Schools That Work testing, and we've used that a lot with our NCA goals to develop instructional strategies that meet these goals.

Chris Harold, the lead teacher in the engineering and math cluster, stated, "The *High Schools That Work*, we believe, more or less, is going to be here. The only problem is that some of the people that are buying in are doing it for their own purposes. Other people, they look upon it as well, and it's just another thing that I have to do. So, I mean, it goes—there's the whole spectrum."

Corrine Joslin, who has been teaching science for ten years, was present when the HSTW program was introduced. Mrs. Joslin stated, "I think over the years we've tried to get the buy-in, but there's just some resistance in different areas, and so the buy-in hasn't been there. Corrine further explained:

> The opportunity to go out and learn new strategies has been there for teachers to engage in. I think teachers are somewhat scared, somewhat not interested, somewhat tired of different things the *High Schools That Work*. Hearing the fact that it's something new, they don't want to do it, tired of the fact that we give it a lot of lip service that we don't really implement all of the different strategies in the classrooms, and I think that's kind of frustrating to them.

Dallas Cox who is the North Central Accreditation chairperson said, "The main *High Schools That Work* practices we've emphasized is the career clusters and working with the careers and through advisory time, you know, the kids are supposed to identify what career they are interested in, and that's a large part of how we do *High Schools That Work."*

Harry Nile who has prepared and coordinated student advisory time for several years said, "Teacher buy-in is the key to it all. If the teachers don't buy-in, it won't go anywhere. I did all of the planning for advisory, but a lot of them just don't want to do anything." The process for implementing the HSTW practices Harry found, "the teachers don't want to mess with it. They hate it. *The High Schools That Work* leadership strategies are really unknown. I mean, people even forget it's even here."

Linda Douglas, the successful business marketing chairperson, describes her frustration with faculty members who will not implement HSTW practices. Linda recalled, "There are always people that won't want to change. Then there's a lot of evidence that *High Schools That Work*, will work. There's always going to be some that don't want to buy-in to anything, and there's going to be those that, I believe, are buying-in, and saying this looks to be a good thing."

Larry Adams, the coordinator for the technology cluster, believes the HSTW practices will work but described his frustration with the process. Larry said, "The *High Schools That Work* strategies are being fragmented and pieced together by a few core teachers that believe in the strategies while trying to practice most of them."

Nick Mann, the enthusiastic science teacher and coach, responded, "I think at one time High Schools That Work was number one, we've really concentrated a lot on the professional development aspect. I think we've give our best in the six to seven years I've been at Public High School A. We've done the linkages. We've incorporated a variety of individuals with different teams and the different clusters." Nick stated the *High Schools That Work* strategies are important:

> I really think the strength so far is that we've give ourselves some variety on different levels of professional development at the beginning of the school year and during the summertime, but even during the school year we've done a lot of things to continue to build upon the emphasis, that we are trying to implement this program and stay on top of it. I think there are some teachers in our building who do a much a better job of implementing and integrating with everybody, but I think on the whole perspective we have good buy-in.

Robin Cobb incorporates a few of the HSTW practices into her credit recovery classroom as she described, "I am implementing a strategy that is under the umbrella of *High Schools That Work* and *No Child Left Behind*. We are getting a head start in preventing drop-outs. I give students hope and a plan of action so they can go ahead and complete their high school and get their diploma and basically a work-study cooperative

type thing with the academic portion." Robin believes the credit recovery curriculum has been successful even though some of her peers view it negatively as she related:

> I take ten kids that we've targeted and that are at least seventeen years old. They are at least six credits behind their graduating peers, and we pull them out half a day. They just come to school in the morning time and then they go to work study. I've had to really justify my program a little bit. Some teachers don't buy-in, and say well, that's a bad thing to do.

Tonya Simes has the least amount of teaching experience but is the lead teacher for the health cluster. She describes how the clusters became successful:

> We have six different clusters and we have one that's pretty developed, but there's still a lot of room for development. I think the health cluster is farther along because of the buy-in from the teachers, and we had a strong support group at the very beginning, and that's why it still exists now. I mean, I think a few of the clusters have gotten far, but most of them haven't, and I don't know if it's something that they're going to stick with.

Tonya described the degree in which the HSTW program is implemented and she found, "It's just hard to get to try something new sometimes. It's new territory and for some people it's just – I don't know. The buy-in is not as great for all of the High Schools That Work program, it just seems like there's so much to do with surveys and with the assessments, and because there's not enough buy-in. I mean, some of the strategies, they'll be around like the advisory."

Raising Students' Expectations

Most of us have probably heard the saying, "you get what you expect." Parents' and teachers' perceptions and expectations do influence many students' accomplishments. Students labeled as low achievers perform lower on average than those labeled as high achievers.

Paula Milton believed the focus on raising student expectations has changed because of the educational law, NCLB. She described some of the following changes: "we are working with the core group to raise expectations and improve our test scores. Schools are so stressed out with the end-of-instruction tests, so we've really focused on our biology tests or algebra and really looking at strategies and raising expectations."

Brenda Lynn continued to search for new instructional strategies that raise expectations. Brenda stated, "We have been working on our school profile last year, identifying strategies that we could do to actually increase student achievement, improve student-centered learning, make it more academically challenging for all career-tech and college bound students, and raise student expectations."

Dallas Cox considers her position as the North Central Steering Committee Chairperson allows her to find new strategies that raise student expectations. Dallas describes her experience as the following:

> The other thing we emphasize would be raising student's expectations by setting higher standards. I think that is one of the key practices and we've worked especially in my department with gifted, I worked to increase, the number of AP courses and the number of kids taking AP courses.

Harry Nile used advisory as a time and place for students to discover their career options while raising their achievement levels. Harry states, “The connection of higher expectations would probably be on the business side trying to get them ready for jobs.”

Linda Douglas feels that higher expectations can be implemented as students begin their high school studies when she stated:

> I am helping ninth graders this year take a look at their high school plans beyond with the assistance of clusters. We’d like for them to set goals and to be able to look forward to what they might want to do in their career and to do some searching throughout the high school years to find out if that’s what they want to do.

Larry Adams said, “High expectations are emphasized more today than in the past, but that may be for only a few students. For example, we had five AP students take a test and that is a start. Most schools that are implementing and using *High Schools That Work* strategies test a large number of their students.”

Robin Cobb held the opinion that teachers should encourage all students to raise their expectations as she stated:

> The expectations that I’m raising is, of course, you’ve got ten kids in one classroom. They’re all on a different subject, so I’m limited to things that we’re doing. I really emphasize reading and math are my electives, so, you know, it doesn’t matter if they’ve already had three courses of math that they just barely got by.

Robin has found that by believing in and supporting her students, they increased their academic performance, “we use this whole test of academic performance yearly, but the ones that I have, I see three grade levels come up.

Tonya Simes, the lead teacher for the successful health cluster, has been required to focus on the following as she stated, “We have raised expectations for reading, math, and problem solving strategies. The stress of meeting API and NCLB has changed our focus from career planning to increase the test scores as Tonya said, “We won’t know until next year if it’s effective, but we have been looking at all our test scores, and our teachers are aware where we need improvement, and we’ve been working with NCA.”

Increasing Student Engagement and Motivation

Teachers may hear the following phrase from their students, “Why do I need to know this?” Students are likely to become more active in the learning process if they believe it’s for a good reason.

According to Paula Milton, the advisory time gave students the opportunity to become more focused and engaged as she stated, “The advisory program is implemented from the ninth grade through a student’s senior year. Teachers start with their group as ninth graders, and move up with that group. We have a different curriculum every year.” Paula believes freshman students will identify more with their education if they are empowered in the learning process as she stated:

> Our freshmen are looking more about acclimating them to high school, preparing them to focus on grades, focusing of credits, and then as they move up, more

towards career skills, towards graduation. So a lot of our curriculum comes, you know, from High Schools That Work ideas and their strategies.

Brenda Lynn has experienced the planning process for integration across the curriculum and various clusters to increase student motivation while serving on the school improvement committee. Brenda said, “Integrating science into all of the different areas, has lost its momentum in our school. Now, the health and marketing/business clusters are really strong programs in our school.”

Chris Harold believed that student engagement is an effective domain that builds confidence and success. Chris stated the following:

> I wrote the contextual geometry textbook that follows state guidelines for people that have normal difficulty passing mathematics. So that’s one of the strategies is to try and reach out to the low-end kids and make sure they succeed. I’m trying to get them to see mathematics as how it applies to various situations. I bring in architectural drawings and other things, to get them to see how math goes into the world.

Dallas Cox believed that student mentoring and real-life experiences are factors in student motivation. Dallas said, “If kids can identify what careers they are interested and follow the career cluster curriculum, they are likely to become more motivated because it relates to the real world. A kid may also find out they don’t like certain aspects of being a nurse by joining the health cluster.”

One of the better learning experiences for a student is the opportunity to set goals and determine or decide what career they want after high school. These experiences can save students time and money after high school. Linda Douglas said,

> I think especially working with the freshmen and bringing up the idea of clustering and trying to get them to start thinking about what they want to do after high school. I still have seniors that don't have any idea what they want to do, but I do think it increases their expectations at least starts putting some ideas into their heads what class do I need to get in order to get there and setting goals? I have seen many students become very interested and may find out that they are in the wrong cluster, and it was a good thing that they investigated that while they were in high school.

Larry Adams, the technology cluster coordinator, said, "By allowing the High Schools That Work clusters to form, the motivation increases for students because they are planning for their future and they are using a curriculum that is relevant today and for their future."

Nick Mann, the basketball coach and science teacher, was of the opinion the HSTW program is a process in which students begin to understand new terminology as Nick stated:

> I think a lot of the juniors and seniors start to see the benefits of *High Schools That Work*. I don't know if our freshmen and sophomores right away understand all of the terminology and all the different options that this type of program allows for you to have, but I do think our juniors and seniors start to feel more comfortable with it and start to understand that it's got a priority and that it can benefit.

Robin Cobb believed that hope and non-traditional learning environments can increase student motivation. Robin noted:

> The first year was kind of slow. We graduated five out of ten kids. What we're doing is, once they reach graduation requirements of 29, we let them go. This quarter, I'm going to have four out with those graduation requirements, and so, I just replaced them and there's no short list on kids that want to get in.

Tonya Simes said that career academies are motivating forces especially for at-risk students. Tonya stated, "Student engagement begins with career emphasis. We did a career awareness day this past year, and we did a career fair and went really well, and it was beneficial to the students, and we got outside business to come and help, and it was the community, just having somebody out there, and we enjoyed so it was really beneficial."

The Professional Development Process

Professional development is the vehicle that allows educators the opportunity to implement the six leadership strategies. The professional development process must include a collaborative culture where teachers are allowed input and the opportunity to be the driving force.

Paula Milton opined that the professional development process is important when implementing the HSTW program as she continued:

> Professional development is needed to train teachers. There are High Schools that work national conventions, workshops, and site-visits. I know we are sending four people to Atlanta this year, and I've gone to Nashville, New Orleans, and South Carolina. They have really good presenters, presenters that we've brought in for

> our district workshops. I think it's a really good opportunity for teachers, for administrators, for everyone.

Brenda Lynn said, "As far as professional development, we are trying to bring in and especially when we decided, these are our goals, especially to try to improve to make it more academically challenging for all, even career-tech and college-bound students, all of these students. A collaborative culture that is attentive to specific goals is an important part of professional development. For example, Brenda stated:

> We try to look at reading strategies as one goal, and we're even bringing in next year a reading specialist that is looking at how we can improve reading strategies. One of our overall dream goals this year was to improve reading. We've done several days of site-based staff development and we're actually doing two more days.

Chris Harold said that the professional development should not be viewed as an isolated meeting with no relationship to school improvement, but the process has changed from attending conferences to an extended faculty meeting as he explained:

> I've been to a *High Schools That Work* summer conference awhile back. It's like a standard, it had a couple of good speakers, but it's, more or less likely, a high-powered regional big staff development thing. We started having the big monthly instead of a short faculty meeting. Everybody has to stick around and they pretty much have a staff development thing every month along with everything else. Instead of just treating us like a professional, they just force-feed it to us.

Corrine Joslin described how budget cuts have lessened the opportunity to attend professional development workshops when she said, "I think that through professional

development, anyone that has wanted to have the opportunity to go to a summer conference, has had the opportunity. This past year we only took two—well, we had the opportunity to take three other people besides the coordinator. We ended up only taking two other people to Louisville and to Atlanta. Before that we've taken up to 15 or 16 people." Corrine also held, "the opportunity for professional development, the opportunity to go out and learn new strategies has been there for teachers to engage in. I think teachers are somewhat scared, somewhat not interested, somewhat tired of different things with High Schools That Work."

School leaders must articulate a vision and support for school improvement. Harry Nile said, "You get more buy-in through professional development. There is very little training for advisory time, or the clusters, or High Schools That Work, it's frustrating for me. It's not the way I hoped it would go. There's no leadership, and that's the key in that. It's got to have total buy-in."

Formal training is productive if training is linked to on the job experiences as Linda Douglas described her professional development opportunities. "I especially think that Public High School A did a good job of providing professional development. Being a career-tech teacher, I have even more training that the majority of the teachers, so it's really not new to me, because I do have other professional development activities that I go to outside of the district."

Professional development agendas should have resource allocations as Larry Adams explained, "Budget cuts and the lower focus of the High Schools That Work from the district administration level has decreased the amount of professional development that was geared toward the strategies. Our district continues to send a few teachers to the

High Schools That Work summer conferences, but that number has decreased over the past several years."

Nick Mann believed the professional development process should be determined by its school improvement plan and the effort to implement the six leadership strategies and HSTW program as Nick explained:

> I think professional development was our number one goal. I think in the six to seven years I've been at Public High School A, we've really concentrated on the quality of professional development. We've done the linkages. We've incorporated a variety of individuals with different teams, different clusters, we've gone that direction and it's been successful. I really think the strength so far and the part that's made me feel more comfortable is that we've given our self some variety on different levels of professional development.

Robin Cobb described professional development as a program with continuous communication. Robin found, "my professional development is, the curriculum organization and work-study coordinates. We meet once a month and exchange ideas about jobs, different motivation type, teaching documentation and keeping up with the work-study portion of it."

Tonya Simes explained that the focus of our professional development has evolved away from the direction for the HSTW program. Tonya noted:

> Public High School A is no longer offering professional development for the *High Schools That Work* program, except for the advisory program. There have been four or five different lead teachers in the past six years with health clusters, and

> even at the other schools I feel like that there's a big turnover rate. I think that's a barrier from having your cluster grow.

Organizational and Management Practices

The organizational changes required to support student learning go above and beyond taking advantage of the professional development process. The faculty members, administrators, and students should have the responsibility for making decisions that affect its staff and student learning. Some educators believe those that are closest to the issues and resources make the most effective decisions. The school day should be interrupted as little as possible to allow the maximum amount of learning time and reallocating teaching resources for increasing student achievement.

Organizational and management practices that increase input from faculty members and students are effective. Paula Milton stated,

> *Our High Schools That Work* district coordinator just resigned this year. We have the clusters, but they have never really totally developed. We looked at the ninth-grade transition. Like I said, our health cluster is very strong. When students are eighth graders and coming to our school, in our advisory time, we do discuss the different clusters.

Faculty members, students, and administrators should focus on one goal at a time. Brenda Lynn described how her school focused on the following goal:

> One of our overall dream goals this year was to improve reading. We implemented more reading time throughout the entire school in our advisory time,

> and we've really kind of seen improvement, at least in consistency, in trying to promote better reading skills and to help them to see that those skills are necessary for academic reading, ACT, understanding each question, that kind of type thing, understanding higher level thinking skills.

Chris Harold was of the opinion that the lead teacher is an important contributor to the procedures and management practices that help create school improvement opportunities. Chris said,

> You have a choice as far as which cluster you can belong to, but if the cluster is having a meeting, they'll call a meeting. They've done the science clusters; they've done the engineering cluster. Some of the clusters communicate really well to each other and some of the people don't. It just depends on who's in charge of them.

Corrine Joslin used school resources to purchase small writing tablets thus supported learning by allowing students to write in journals as she stated:

> This past year, I went to a writing workshop and learned just how to do a writing, a journal that was subject appropriate, and I teach chemistry. Sometimes it's hard to know what to write about, but it gave some very good strategies to help students write down how they are thinking about the curriculum. I can do informal assessment at the time that they're questioning the material and trying to understand it themselves. We've really tried to start integration across the curriculum.

Organizational and management practices should include democratic participation among principals and staff members. The lack of financial assistance and leadership support leads to burnout and frustration as Harry Nile explained:

> I am in charge of advisory time and the whole thing gets changed. I use the curriculum from Louisiana mainly and the one we created for the district. Dates get switched, and it's very political, and like the first semester I was in charge and I probably came up with two ideas. I had no control, and now this whole nine weeks I've been nothing but control. But, I don't think I'll do it next year!

According to Linda Douglas additional school resources such as telephones must be purchased to help faculty members accomplish certain tasks:

> Dr. Level has encouraged us to record and monitor how many phone calls we take and what kind of response we have with each one of the parents that we try to contact. The advisory time teacher must be reliable to keep up the students' records and keep a file folder for them to go back and make sure they keep their grades up.

Larry Adams stated that the district and school administration must support faculty members decisions and actions while implementing school improvement strategies, "The lack of district and site administrative support has prohibited the motivation and focus that the *High Schools That Work* strategies deserve. These strategies are flickering at best at PHS B, and surviving at PHS A. The PHS A site based administrator (Mrs. Milton) has done her best to keep the process going."

Nick Mann held the opinion that a few faculty members lose their focus on being student centered and increasing student achievement because they get burned out and lost in the process as he stated:

> I think there's a true desire to implement the six leadership strategies and I think the teachers want to, and do. I think sometimes there's not as much understanding of the strategies or to see that the different opportunities are being laid out there to help strengthen that bond from department to department. I still think it's very frustrating, some of the faculty, and I don't think it in a negative sense. I think it's just they sometimes see this as extra work.

Shifting schedules around and providing a smaller learning environment or community increases student achievement as Robin Cobb explained:

> The students come in a little bit later than the other kids, but our school day starts when they arrive. We've cut down on tardies completely and it's hardly—the absences should be improved. I've got kids coming to school now, and they're not leaving. The way to explain is that you've missed out on your academics the previous two years of school and you're going to graduate with your peers so you are making it up. That's the name recovery.

Establishing Linkages

Schools are a place of interest for parents, employers, and organizations, all of whom benefit when effective schools prepare students for life and careers. Educators

must communicate with the larger community, share their expertise and resources in achieving the school goals.

Paula Milton stressed the importance of all stakeholders such as parents, employers, and students being involved in the educational process and implementation of the six leadership strategies. She stated, “The community aspect is real important, you could pull in the businesses, and the job mentoring or the job shadowing. I can see all play a real important part because the business partnerships are a real important part of the High Schools That Work.”

Chris Harold tried to incorporate real world experiences, communication, and linkages into his classroom instructional strategies as he stated:

> We’re still losing some of the students to dropping out, but we do get more of them. Most of the kids that we have, or the ones that I see during the day, not the programming kids, but the other ones, most of those particular students are the ones that we would have in danger of dropping out before. So there are some late bloomers that are just figuring it out. I bring in architecture and drawings to relate math to the real world.

Corrine Joslin described the importance of giving students the opportunity to view the whole picture by connecting assignments to careers and the real world as she explained:

> We’ve got tech-ed integrating with the health career cluster and they are integrating with some of the English classes, and we celebrate monthly integration projects that are going on around the school so that teachers can see. Yes, it’s a lot of work, but it’s not that hard to do, and you can integrate across the subject and

> really work towards getting the kids to understand that connection to outside of the school arena or to the workplace or something that they are interested in.

Harry Nile explained that educators should help build linkages between students and the business world. These relationships allow students the opportunity to build career opportunities for students he said, “The connection would be on the business side trying to get them ready for a job.”

Linda Douglas described the importance of parental involvement in the student’s pre-enrollment and academic process, and pursuing career decisions. Linda realized,

> We have for the last three or four years for sure had an awesome response of having parents come to the pre-enrollment. With advisory time, I think I’ve had probably 16 out of 18 parents show up. We need to bring in more industry people, maybe have a good advisory committee to work with and take a look at what we’re doing. I know a lot of kids that have gone into the health cluster and then find out that during high school that they can’t stand the sight of needles and blood. In my marketing program the students will realize how much work it really is. They really don’t want to be on their feet 12 to 14 hours a day, they want to look at something else.

Larry Adams discovered that advisory should play an important part in developing relationships among teachers, students, parents, and community members as he said:

> The one area that has really benefited from the implementation of these strategies is the linkages developed between teachers, parents, and students in the enrollment arena and career-planning process. The advisory time that every

> teacher and student attends once a month should allow the business community the opportunity to develop the relationships with teachers and students and to encourage career awareness.

Nick Mann has noticed linkages developing as the student progresses through their high school years as he remarked, “I think a lot of the juniors and seniors start to see the benefits of *High Schools That Work* curriculum and the linkages that develop. I think that’s where we’re seeing it.”

Robin Cobb helped students establish linkages with other students, parents, and business owners during her credit recovery program. Robin said, “The linkages I have built with parents, students, and employers are exciting. We begin to see these kids graduate or seek the requirements, and, of course, they always want to know if they get to walk and graduate in a blue robe. The parents and students are so proud to get the opportunity to participate in the graduation ceremony.” The question that Robin asks her students and parents is, “What are these students going to do after graduation?” Robin felt strongly about establishing relationships in her program. She concluded:

> I still need that plumber or I need that kid that’s working in, just for the foundation of the society. We still need people that one kid who is working with his dad building out-door buildings, and, he’s learning carpentry skills. I just don’t feel like everybody should go to college, and if they don’t know 13 sonnets of Shakespeare, well, I think there’s still a pretty decent person.

According to Tonya Simes, building linkages is important because it has created relationships and support from students and teachers that kept the leadership strategies implemented as she stated:

> We worked with a local hospital and they are our partner, I mean, there is a big need for nurses and people in the health profession, and the job demand is so high. So this was something that they wanted to implement into our schools. I mean, there was buy-in from the teachers, and we had strong support group at the very beginning, and that's why the health cluster still exists right now.

Monitored and Accelerated Improvement

Educators must be prepared to implement data accountability management systems effectively. The issues that must be understood are the strengths and weaknesses of using data, implementing valuable data-driven evaluations at the school site-level, and transferring data from an administrative record-keeping system to data being used by teachers for improving instructional strategies.

The increased focus on test scores and accountability has been implemented because of NCLB Paula Milton said, "We are monitoring and charting our three site goals including reading, emphasis on reading competency, and literacy. All administrators have core subjects to work with. I am working with the math teachers, specifically, Algebra I scores. There is one administrator that works with science, especially Biology I. We are charting the end-of-instruction and API scores."

Brenda Lynn found that charts, test scores, and data can be used to improve instructional strategies and show how effective the six school improvement strategies are for raising student achievement:

> We want to show the teachers how we are improving. It is important for the teachers to see improvement as far as scores on the Plan, ACT, or anything like that. So we are thinking about showing that at the beginning of our professional development instead of waiting until the end of May. We want to get buy-in, and look at data maybe in more meaningful way, instead of just giving the teachers a bunch of charts.

Chris Harold held the opinion that educators should use data to improve curriculum, instruction, and student achievement instead of keeping score for political reasons. He found:

> With the way that the state is requiring three math credits now, I thought about how to teach geometry for all levels such as uppers, lowers, and middles. I want to get through to the people that would have normal difficulty passing that. We're still losing some of them to dropping out, but we do get more of them. Student results, student achievement, assessment and achievement by students should be the end result, but for some it's political.

Data should be generated and used by faculty members to improve instructional strategies and re-teach certain concepts that students had difficulty understanding as shown by their periodic assessments. Corrine Joslin said,

> We have a site leadership team looking at data. They look at implementing the NCA tags, and then, we also have an academic council which looks more academics, especially with end-of-instruction tests, ACT scores, and managing. All the data is brought to us so that we can see where our school is at with API. We can see where the school is headed as far as end-of-instruction exams for all

> of the different end-of -instruction tests that we take. We can look at failures. That data has driven the things that we've focused on through *High Schools That Work* in NCA.

Dallas Cox discussed the importance of using data to make better curriculum and instructional decisions. For example,

> It takes our building administration to be willing to schedule it and work with the counselors on it. It takes the teacher to be willing to take the training to teach AP, and it takes those central office administrators to allow it to be put in the curriculum. So, it's really, one of those things that it takes everybody, plus the students to enroll in it and take the AP exams.

Harry Nile organized the advisory program similar to one that was planned and implemented in another state. Harry said, "I've seen people talk about the great success of advisory time because of the curriculum being used that we got from Louisiana. I found out, it's not being used anymore. They had problems with buy-in down in Louisiana, it was statewide."

Linda Douglas used data to increase parental involvement. She said, "The pre-enrollment process through advisory time was new to the freshman students. I took the time to make a personal phone call to every parent or guardian to stress the importance of coming to arena enrollment. If they didn't come I was going to do their schedule for them. I had about ninety percent of the parents attend."

Larry Adams said, "The use of data is very important while increasing the number of students that take and pass the AP exams. Other high schools that are honored as

exemplary High Schools That Work have increased the number of students involved in AP testing to around ten percent of the total enrollment."

Cindy Cobb said it is of utmost importance how teachers use the data. For example,

> We have rows and rows of transcripts on each student, and they may only pass a gym class. It's terrible to spend two years of high school and that's all it is, kind of break down the self ego and self esteem ego. They do succeed and they're sticking with it. I've only had one really quit on me out of two years.

The School's Culture

Walk into any school and you may discover the traditions and values that are important to administrators, teachers, parents, and alumni. Notice the pictures hanging on the walls, the trophies or plaques in the cases, the attitudes and behaviors displayed by teachers and students, and the culture may become apparent. The school's culture can be a fertile environment to implement the six leadership strategies or can be resistant to change. Paula Milton described the demographics of PHS A and PHS B as very similar, "but both schools have had an awakening as the demographics and the cultures are changing slowly but surely. The culture of each school affects the implementation process for the six strategies."

PHS A is trying to create a culture that encourages change and allows better implementation of these strategies according to Brenda Lynn:

> We are in the process of putting more professional development into advisory times, because it's such an integral part of High Schools That Work, focusing on the students' goals and getting them to do those academic challenging courses. It's just a lot of teachers don't talk about High Schools That Work, the phrase itself, people are kind of like, "What?" You know, the school improvement strategies that we are trying to implement. Dr. Level is supportive at the committee meetings, but she is kind of like well, it's not that she doesn't believe this is what she told me—it's not that she doesn't believe in the goals and the career and all that stuff, but it's just kind of lost its momentum, or a lot of people just haven't bought into it or what, but it's just really kind of a program not in existence very much.

The school's culture has been changing during the past few years. According to Chris Harold, "it's not quite the family we once were. It's more in groups of people. Some people interact with all the groups, but for the most part, it's pretty much gone. There's the B workroom, and then there's the J hall upper and J hall lower. The entire new wing is off in their own little trip, and then the G hall bunch. So it's somewhat fragmented.

According to Corrine Joslin, faculty members with the school's culture are skeptical of implementing the strategies because they are viewed as another temporary program that will pass:

> The principal has done a really good job with setting up more teacher-driven management as a school. And this probably could have gone along with looking at change, and when we sit down, we have our monthly faculty meeting, which is

> more professional development now, but it is student-body driven. The opportunity for training and learning the strategies is there for teachers to engage in. I think teachers are somewhat scared, somewhat not interested, somewhat tired of different things with High Schools That Work. Hearing the fact that it's something new, they don't want to do it, tired of the fact that we give it a lot of lip service, that we don't really implement all of the different strategies in the classroom, and I think it's frustrating.

Getting educators to buy-in to the same program is a challenge as Dallas Cox stated, "Our school's culture seems very schizophrenic. Cause, we have those parents and students and teachers that want to do that and we have others that don't. There are a lot of those who aren't willing to do anything new and change and try anything. But, then, there are an awful lot that are. So, it's a mix, I mean that's part of the schizophrenic thing that I was saying."

Harry Nile describes the changes he has witnessed in the school's culture, "The school culture has changed a lot. The faculty is separated, you can't get the sells, but the new pups (teachers) are the ones who are going to be running most of the stuff. The people with less than three years of experience are all gung ho." Harry has witnessed another change in the culture, "The student body has changed to 30 percent African-American, 15 percent Hispanic, probably 5 to 10 percent Asian, and that tells you right there, we're under 50 percent white. The leadership strategies must adapt to the needs of minority students."

Linda Douglas has witnessed the changes in the school's culture.

> I think our demographics have changed tremendously since I came to PHS A, and sometimes it is a little bit more difficult even with the society today. Sometimes it's difficult to reach everyone and I think students will be very successful without that home approval because we take time, our advisory time, to take care of them. I know there probably are some teachers that especially like on pre-enrollment don't feel like they are the ones that should be doing that, but then, again, I know that we're all more aware of classes that are offered. There's many teachers that probably wouldn't even investigate the clusters or take time to know more about that it takes to graduate with different things. They would just go ahead and teach their subjects and go on. I think it's been good for the teachers to have an open-mind.

Larry Adams described the school's culture as constantly changing. He stated, "The culture of the school has changed over the past seven years with a more diverse student population and changes in the faculty. The PHS A site remains an open and progressive faculty with a small amount of support from the principal and district administration. The district administration seeks a district focus on all goals being the same in both high schools."

> *The High Schools That Work* strategies are being piecemealed together at PHS A, as a few core teachers believe in these strategies while trying to practice most of them. The culture is open to the High Schools That Work strategies even though the principal isn't the main supporter of the implementation of these strategies. The assistant principal, Mrs. Milton, and a few teachers are the main forces of

support behind the leadership strategies. Nick Mann opined that a school's culture must nurture change to effectively implement school improvement. He said, Our technology department, our math department, and our science department have done tremendous things. They've really done a lot of things together. Environmental science is doing our mentorship program. All those things have done the things that they need to do, and they've implemented these strategies. They've used the staff development. They've used the outside opportunities. They've used the philosophy of developing a culture that understands it.

Robin Cobb was of the opinion that even though some faculty members describe her credit recovery program as too easy they support the benefits,

The administration and most faculty members are supportive of the program. They do everything they're supposed to. They're on time everyday. They come to class. They don't give any trouble, never had a referral, and they don't get recognized for anything that they've done, and my kids have done just about everything. They're getting a second chance, and that's where that type of commitment kind of demonstrates, but like I said, we're not in the business of throwing kids away.

Tonya Simes discussed how school improvement strategies may generate excitement at the beginning but may lose momentum as she said,

We've had clusters since 1996. A few of the clusters have gotten far, but most of them haven't, and I don't know if it's something that they're going to stick with, and there's not enough buy-in. If it's not something that they've taught before it's just hard to get to try something new sometimes. There is so much to do with

surveys and with assessments, and some of the strategies will be around such as advisory. Put more career and business into our schools, but I don't know if High Schools That Work will stick around.

Case Two: Public High School B (PHS B)

PHS B began in 1914 as the district's only building, housing not only students in grades nine-twelve, but the administration as well. The present day high school was opened in 1958 as the first original high school in the district. In 1964, a new high school auditorium was built at a cost of $529, 549. During the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s white flight increased student enrollment, and PHS B became overcrowded. In 1968, despite serious concerns about splitting the high school student body, PHS A was finished. Seniors who lived in the newly established school boundary remained at PHS B and graduated in 1969.

Today, the current enrollment of 1930 was divided into the following ethnic categories: 2 percent Asian, 17 percent Black, 68 percent Caucasian, 8 percent Hispanic, and 5 percent Native American. Approximately 24 percent of the student body was eligible for the free and reduced lunch programs. There were 99 full time faculty members with an average teaching experience of 16 years, and 40 percent have advanced degrees.

Facilities

The faculty and staff parking lots are located on the west and southeast sides of the school. As faculty members enter the building, they sign in and out in the main office. Administrators, faculty, and staff members were courteous during my visits and observations. I was greeted several times by a student assigned to welcome visitors and to direct me to my destination.

The student parking lot is located on the northeast side of the school. A campus police officer monitors the parking lot making sure the students do not leave without permission. During the day all students are required to check out in the office before leaving the parking lot.

The trophy cases located in front of the office contained numerous academic accomplishments such as plaques, trophies, and pictures. The faculty workroom located across the hall from the main office stored teachers' mailboxes, tables, restrooms, and a copy machine.

The white hallways, classrooms, library, and cafeterias were neat and clean. The security cameras located throughout the building were protected by glass globes. The 65 cameras located throughout the school hallways were monitored by the school resource officer, because school safety was an important aspect of the school's culture. A student informed me that the security system is named "big brother."

The main school building is a light red brick two-story building that has been remodeled or updated in several areas recently. The library had new carpet recently installed, computers, and lamps that create a calm study-hall atmosphere.

The two cafeterias are located in the middle and on the east side of the school where students are served breakfast and lunch daily. One cafeteria serves traditional hot lunches, and the other cafeteria provides several choices for students. Students are allowed to sit in the courtyard during lunch.

Students can walk through the courtyard decorated with benches and shade trees while going to classes in the science building which is detached from the main part of the school. The science building located on the southeast side reminded me of a small college campus.

The school has two gymnasiums. The new gym is decorated with numerous academic banners celebrating state championships. It is also used for assemblies and athletic events. Several large gold trophies are located in the glass cases to be viewed by anyone entering the new gym. The older gym was used mainly for physical education classes and practices.

After exiting the old gym, I walked into the large auditorium where plays, assemblies and baccalaureates are held, that recently had a new sound system installed. A roof repair was in progress.

The football field is the host stadium for both high schools in the district and its natural grass surface was replaced with artificial turf. There were sprinklers watering the baseball and softball fields. The remodeled concession stand and large lights swaying in the wind provided an opportunity for night time athletic events.

The marquee located on the west side of the high school is highly visible from the busy street and provides information about school activities and announcements for parents, patrons, and students. The school is located in the suburbs of a city in the

southern plains in a clean residential middle-class neighborhood surrounded by single family homes built in the 1960s. Across the street from the school is a lake and large sports complex that is used by the metropolitan youth to play baseball, football, and soccer. This area of the city is considered middle class and safe.

Public High School B (PHS B) Participants

Dr. William Dean, Principal (7-6-04). Dr. Dean a former junior high basketball coach, always greeted me with a smile and handshake. Dr. Dean is 52 years old, and has been in education for 28 years.

During his educational career he served as an assistant principal for three years, a junior high principal for nine years, and he has been the principal at PHS B for two years. Dr. Dean held the opinion that educators were hired to meet the students' needs. He did not have a goal to become a superintendent, because he enjoyed being around the students. Every tie he wore had a school bus, an apple, or design that promoted education. Dr. Dean carried a hand-held radio with him to communicate with other administrators, security officers, custodians, and other district employees. The students admired and respected their principal because he respected and cared about them.

He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Science and his Doctorate degree from the same state university. He earned his Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling from a different state university.

Brad Nathan, Teacher (11-13-04). Brad had a mid-western accent he acquired while growing up in Ohio. His technological talents were evident as he loaded software

on several computers. He was the sponsor of the Technology Student Association. Several students in the technology center were working on their web sites.

Brad is 46 years old and has been in education for 22 years. He has been teaching technology education at PHS B for ten years. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Manufacturing and Communication from a mid-western university.

Holly Standard, Teacher (1-08-04). Holly, known as Senora Standard by her students, has taught advanced Spanish classes for ten years at PHS B. Holly is 50 years old and has been in education for 30 years. Small flags from around the world adorned her classroom wall as several students were practicing a Latino dance that was to be performed in the school's multicultural assembly.

She has taught advanced Spanish classes for ten years at Public High School B. She received her Bachelor's Degree from a state university in Spanish, and her Master's Degree in Multicultural Education from a university in another country. One of her biggest accomplishments was becoming National Board Certified. .

Kara Stone, Teacher (3-11-04). Kara always greeted me with a smile and assisted me with documents or needed information. Mrs. Stone taught leadership classes and was the Activities Director at PHS B for 16 years. She was helping students complete their log-in hours for their volunteer work in the leadership class. The students were also planning a reading project for students in an elementary school and they had just completed volunteer hours in an adolescent counseling center.

Kara is 52 years old and has been in education for 26 years. She previously taught science for ten years at another school. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Science

Education from a state university and her Master's Degree in Counseling from a state university.

Valerie Thomas, Teacher (2-12-94). Valerie's biggest concern was getting her English II students prepared for the end-of-instruction exam. Valerie Thomas was an inspiration to her students, because she taught them to never give up, even when they made mistakes.

She is 54 years old and she has been in education for 21 years. She has taught English, ACT Prep, and study skills at PHS B for three years. She received her Bachelor's Degree in English Education from a state university. She received her Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from a private university.

Will Severns, Teacher (11-7-03). Will was always helpful, friendly, and he greeted me with a handshake and smile. Will was supporting the previous principal who was running in the local school board election. Even though he taught English, ACT Prep, and communications at Public High School B for 13 years, he cared about those students that were not going to college.

Will is 54 years old and has been an educator for 14 years. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in English Education from a university in the southeastern part of the United States. He earned his Master's Degree in English and Administration from a state university.

Wallace Pile, Teacher (12-13-03). Wallace was straight to the point during my visits and interview. His flat top haircut matched his no-nonsense personality. He was the assistant football and wrestling coach. He also served as the administrative intern when other administrators were absent.

Wallace is 33 years old and has been an educator for ten years. He has taught chemistry and physical science for five years at PHS B. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Biology Education from a state university and his Master's Degree in School Administration from a state university.

Mary Britton, Teacher (10-26-03). Mary has been the HSTW coordinator for the past four years. She enjoys teaching her students about the real world of business. Several of her students are serving as interns in local businesses through her business mentorship classes.

Mary is 57 years old and has been at PHS B for all of her teaching career. She has taught business for nine years at PHS B. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Business Education from a state university.

Wanda Crest, Teacher (5-2-04). Wanda was the lead teacher for the health cluster. One of her students was wearing the PHS B Health Academy uniform which was a white t-shirt and black shorts monogrammed with the logo. Her favorite aspect of being a teacher was allowing her senior students the opportunity to complete six weeks of job shadowing. All students were given the opportunity to present their experiences in their senior presentations.

After teaching and coaching for 20 years, Wanda was self-motivated, honest, and self-confident. The 45 year old has taught science and the health science careers at PHS B for the past three years. She earned her Bachelor's Degree from a state university in Science Education.

Wilma Lewis, Teacher (6-1-04). Wilma encourages her students to develop their technology skills in her classroom by attending the career tech. She informs her class that the options for anyone certified in technology are limitless.

Wilma is 56 years old and has been in education for 20 years. She has taught accounting and computer applications at PHS B for the past 18 years. She dressed very business-like and was a professional role-model for her students. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Business Education and her Master's Degree in Secondary Education from the same state university.

Kevin Jumper (6-8-04). Kevin a former wrestling coach was very excited when the HSTW program started at PHS B, because the strategies helped students become more successful in life. He was of the opinion that faculty members should teach real-life applications to their students regardless of the subject. For example, he was allowing his students the opportunity to organize a mock election and prepare speeches.

Kevin is 58 years old and has taught social studies at PHS B for nine years and has been in education for 28 years. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Social Studies and Master's in Administration from state universities.

Mission Statement

"To enable and empower today's students to be aware of, adapt to, and improve current culture and standards of living while creating a better future of America."

Dr. William Dean facilitated the school improvement committee that met monthly after school in the library. Members of the committee who attended the meeting included

the activities director, athletic director, North Central steering committee coordinator, professional development chairperson, student council sponsor, and the HSTW coordinator. If they were unable to attend the meeting a subcommittee member represented them.

An agenda was created allowing input and discussion from each member of the committee. Chairperson presented updates regarding their area of interest. The HSTW coordinator gave an update about any upcoming HSTW workshops or conferences, activities or fieldtrips planned by the clusters, and updates on the progress of the freshman academies. Most of the discussion focused on planning the end-of-instruction testing dates, improving instructional strategies in the testing areas of Algebra I, American History, Biology I, and English II. Refreshments such as tea, cookies, and chips were served.

The members of the school improvement committee took their agenda items back to their subcommittees. The subcommittees met prior to the next monthly school improvement meeting after school in the chairperson's classroom. Meetings were scheduled after school and lasted approximately one hour. During the subcommittee meetings the chairperson would often present the goal and delegate the work to several committee members. Notes were taken, minutes, agendas, and other documents were collected while observing the meetings

The school improvement committee developed the following school improvement recommendations for the school year:

- Students will demonstrate an increase in responsible behavior within the school environment.

- Align programs and curriculum to promote increased student participation in opportunities fostering post high school academic success.
- Students will utilize knowledge of technology communication, research, problem-solving, and decision-making tools across the curriculum.

Goals and Resulting Themes

High Schools That Work (HSTW) Practices

The HSTW school improvement model was evaluated empirically on the evidence of positive effects on student achievement by the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program. The HSTW model was the most highly rated in both evidence of positive effects on student achievement and on the level of support the developer provides schools (Herman, Aladjern, McMahon, Masem, Mulligan, O'Malley, Quinones, Reeve & Woodruff, 1999).

The administrators and teachers were asked to describe how the HSTW is implemented in their school. Dr. William Dean was not the principal when the HSTW practices were implemented. He stated:

> The practices are good, but I am learning more about them. The key to implementing any school improvement practices including *High Schools That Work* is having the right teachers in place as leaders and educating faculty members through professional development. Some of the strategies are easy to

support, but not to understand. I am trying to focus on the clusters, advisory, and a ninth-grade academy for at-risk students.

Brad Nathan commented that only a small part of the HSTW strategies or clusters are being implemented:

> I mean we do have *High Schools That Work* and we're working with school within a school type setting where we have different cluster areas. There's a lead teacher that kind of leads each cluster area or each school within a school, and we give out information and try to keep people working together. The principals and counselors are cheerleaders and they try to give us what we need to make things work in the classroom, as well as, time to plan, time to do what we need to do.

Holly Standard held the opinion that the clusters are an important part of the HSTW practices which are being implemented. She explained:

> I think the main *High Schools That Work* practices we are implementing are the clusters and the most successful is the health cluster. With those kids, with certain individual kids, that were in the health cluster, they were motivated, by the things that they were doing and the visits they were making, and they were seeing things that without the school work focus they could not have seen. I saw a lot of excitement in that, but there were –six clusters. That was the only one I really saw just turning the kids on.

Kara Stone has watched most of the HSTW practices eliminated because of the change in administration. She has worked with three different principals as she detailed:

> We have worked with the *High Schools That Work* probably for quite a while. The previous principal was very much a believer and really in on it as it began

> quite a few years ago. I don't really remember how many, but six or seven or more and very much wanted all the students to be involved and saw it as every student in high school be in the cluster and focusing all their educational work towards the cluster. As we changed principals, we are now in our third principal since *High Schools That Work* practices were implemented, there is not as much emphasis on the clusters or strategies.

Valerie Thomas said, "We have a health cluster. We have a business cluster. We have about five or six of them. There is a technical and engineering, a science and math. I've got a whole pile of those clusters in my desk." Valerie described other aspects of the HSTW strategies that are implemented:

> Another practice we are looking at implementing are the ninth grade academies for kind of smaller learning community type situation with the incoming freshmen. When I look at our daily suspension report, probably 80 percent of them are ninth-graders, and we have a bunch who just really have a tough time making a transition in high school. It's one thing we've been looking at is this ninth-grade academy kind of school within a school where we got about 82 of our most at-risk freshman and kind of sitting on them with some individualized, kind of whole separate little area of the school maybe just for them, with a counselor working with them as a separate administrator. We are working at the school trying to get rid of the failure rate in the ninth grade and lower the drop-out rate among those kids.

Will Severn's described the decline in the HSTW strategies he has witnessed over the past few years:

> The *High Schools That Work* strategies are basically non-existent here at PHS B compared to its peak a few years ago, it was only window dressing at best. It was never implemented to its fullest. I contribute this failure to a lack of commitment by the district administration and a lack of commitment by the building administrators. For any leadership strategy to work, the administration must be committed to the strategy, convince the faculty it's worthwhile, and provide on-going training and support. The cluster that worked well was the health cluster. The fact that it worked at all was due to the involvement of the hospital coupled with a very dedicated teacher at the high school. This is the only cluster that became functional. The others died a slow death.

Wallace Pile implied a few strategies are practiced, "We've got a mentorship program, where we have the health cluster and we have the national science cluster and that's how we track the kids, other than that, we don't do too much with it."

Mary Britton is the coordinator for the mentoring program, and she verified the changes in the HSTW program:

> It's a concept that a previous principal introduced *High Schools That Work*, and he was two principals ago. He was a strong believer in it, and the rest of us who were strong believers jumped on board. There are large factions that don't see any reason in changing and have yet to jump on board. So it's a concept that to me all schools everywhere should follow. By that I mean, they're to me more focused on the four by four and all kids are going to college and as if they are not going to end up at work in the workforce eventually, anyway. I think the practice of the High Schools That Work strategies has gone by the wayside after a previous

> principal retired. And it started going by the wayside his last year, because he was ready to retire and gave up his last year. So, it really hasn't been in place for this—is the fourth year now.

Wilma Lewis said, "In addition to the health cluster, we have the business and marketing, technology, social sciences, natural sciences, fine arts, and home economic clusters. We have a person on staff who is our *High Schools That Work* coordinator as does Public High School A. We have really had lip service from the administration at our school as far as support for the cluster, but not real action."

Wanda Crest described how she brought real-world experiences into the classroom:

> I am the lead teacher over the health cluster. For example, my seniors, those who qualify, get to do six weeks of job shadowing in an area of interest, and that's usually in a nursing field, surgery, veterinarians and so forth. One student of mine in anesthesiology, so he was in surgery each time, and when he gave his senior presentation, he was able to do such a good job of explaining exactly what it means putting someone under and bringing someone out. He's able to put together what he'd learned in science and math, and about basically hypertonic solutions and isotonic solutions and why the blood would absorb the chemicals, and then how you're able to bring somebody out. He was actually in surgery, and then it just made sense to him then what he had learned in the classroom.

Raising Students' Expectations

Most of us have probably heard the saying, "you get what you expect." Parents' and teachers' perceptions and expectations do influence many students' accomplishments. Students labeled as low achievers perform lower on average than those labeled as high achievers.

Dr. William Dean wanted to address the problem of lower expectations for at-risk students as they enter high school. Dr. Dean said, "I am planning on raising expectations through the ninth grade academy next year. We will enroll about 100 of our most at-risk students in a smaller classroom setting similar to an alternative school, with more one-on-one attention and tutoring. Our goal is to keep all students in school and graduate beginning their freshman year by decreasing the number of drop-outs."

Brad Nathan believed, "The budget cuts affected our high expectations and changes. We went from working with 20 to 25 students to working with 27 to 37 students in a class, so that kinda changes your whole outlook and your whole perspective of how you do things. For example, that's where you lose out, because increasing expectations and adding more students is a reverse factor."

Holly Standard has found there has been an effort to increase curriculum and academic rigor through higher standards as she stated:

> Under our *High Schools That Work* premise I have seen expectations rise. I wouldn't call it—give me a scale of one to ten. It would be a five, probably. I think better leadership is needed, it just seems to be sporadic, and we changed

principals in mid-stream and one was a strong school to work opponent, and one wasn't. So the focus changed.

Kara Stone noted that student motivation will rise when they see the relevance of their efforts she said, "The lead teacher in the cluster and the community leadership does a lot for the development of the challenging curriculum which is very relevant. The students join the clusters for real-world instruction and high expectations."

Valerie Thomas opined that all faculty members play an important role in raising students' expectations:

> I think there's some who are thinking, they're in high school, and they need to just grow up and learn to adapt, but they're not growing up and they're not learning to adapt, so we've got to do something. We can't continue to allow them to flounder around, and a lot of them are kids who don't have much support at home, who don't have much guidance and just need a little bit. I think, is just they are immature, and they just need some time and some help to grow up a little bit to adjust to high school.

Will Severns stated that raising the achievement or expectations level includes meeting the academic needs of every student:

> To graduate from our school, students must complete 29 credits, more than the state requirements. This emphasis on a college track curriculum does not serve this student body well. Many of our students need an opportunity to attend the state career-tech system, for instance, but are prevented from doing so because of all the required classes. The state's four x four x three mandated curriculum also hinders many students from achieving success, thus increasing drop-outs.

According to Wallace Pile higher expectations today focus on raising test scores because of NCLB. Wallace said, “Dr. Dean came in and he wanted to increase the expectations for our testing, and so, we have a bunch of teachers that meet together—a steering committee that meets to come up with ideas to improve our end-of-instruction test scores.”

Setting higher academic goals is important to many educators according to Mary Britton, “The main thing a previous principal wanted to focus on when implementing the *High Schools That Work* practices was to have high academic standards, but relevant to the real world without watering down what we are doing, that would be the ultimate goal.”

Wilma Lewis found, “students are willing to raise their own expectations when they see the opportunity to complete a curriculum that includes real-world experiences. They are willing to spend more time studying if they understand the knowledge will be needed for their work site. I have witnessed many students buckle down and become more involved in school, and raising their grades because school becomes more relevant.”

Wanda Crest believed there should be a relationship between raising expectations and real-life experiences:

> As far as the students who go through my program, you’re going to see how important it is that you move ahead in your math and science. Of course, you’re required all four years in your English, and they’re even seeing now in the medical field how important to continue on further than one and two in foreign language.

Increasing Student Engagement and Motivation

Teachers may hear the following phrase from their students, “Why do I need to know this?” Students are more likely to become more active in the learning process if they believe it’s for a good reason.

Dr. Dean is always looking for new instructional strategies and curriculum to increase student motivation. He said, “The health cluster was successful because of the organizational skills of the lead teacher. Unfortunately, she left our school last year. The students involved in the cluster were really engaged because the curriculum and fieldtrips allowed real-world experiences. The advisory time was established to allow students the opportunity to have a teacher mentor for support, enrollment, and career planning.”

Real-world experiences should be relevant in the classroom to increase student motivation as Kara Stone said,

> It’s a hands-on type thing. And it was a relatively small group that they were very focused. I don’t remember how many, maybe 30 kids overall, 30 or 40. There were more kids that took some of the classes that were identified as the health cluster. I think there is a medical terminology and some other things that they put into that cluster, so it might have touched more than just 30, but there were probably 30 that got the greatest benefit from it that enrolled in those courses all the way through and really did the internships.

At-risk students benefit from increased student engagement, but it takes a teacher with a desire to motivate this group of students according to Valerie Thomas,

> You take these same kids and you put them with the same core group, almost a team type situation, like from middle school, so the teachers, know this particular group of kids, and it's a little harder for them to slip through the cracks when somebody is on their case all the time. Well, actually, that's one of the things that got the grant for staff development for people. I wrote a teaching application for the teachers, to see who wanted to teach that particular group, because we're not just going to assign teachers to it. It really needs to be somebody, who's interested in working with at-risk type kids. Once we get our core groups of teachers, we'll take that particular group and do the staff development with them.

Will Severn's said that student services play an important role in student motivation, but our administrators focus on other goals. Will stated, "The number one goal of our administration is discipline managing 2000 students is the top priority. Instructional leadership and curriculum development are secondary goals. Everything is subsumed by policing and discipline concerns. Securing the building and providing a safe learning environment is crucial to our administration. Efforts to improve curriculum, teaching strategies, assessment, fall down the line."

The more support services for students, the higher the student motivation according to Wallace Pile, "We still have the numerous resources available including lesson plans from *High Schools That Work*. The bottom line is the positive results the students receive from the practices."

Mary Britton believed in the relevance of the curriculum to increase student motivation and engagement,

> The light bulb will come on when the students see the relevance to the real world. I allow the freshmen in my careers class the opportunity to go to work-sites first hand and see what they do in the businesses. They show the kids what kind of skills they will need and what they expect of you, as far as, work ethic as an employee. They tell them they need to know their math and write correctly. The students realize what they do in school does matter even though they have heard that from teachers. They hear it from the business people and the light bulb goes on.

Wilma Lewis has found, "the health cluster has been successful because students see the reason why they have to learn science terminology, chemistry, and physiology. Some of the students took a fieldtrip to a hospital to watch a knee surgery and wrote about it in a class. These are the assignments that increase student engagement and motivation."

When students explained that student motivation begins when they see a correlation between school and life as Wanda Crest said,

> You go to class and you hear, but until you really get to see—just like getting to see Chris makes that correlation between the anesthesiology and what he learned in his math and especially his science classes, that's when the motivation came. I think there has to be more examples like that shown to the teachers, because they could make their lessons so much more fun.

The Professional Development Process

Professional development is the vehicle that allows educators the opportunity to implement the six leadership strategies. Professional development should include a collaborative culture and teachers as the driving force in the process.

> Dr. Dean discussed his plans next year to implement the ninth-grade academies:
>
> Beginning the next school year, I am going to emphasize more professional development for the clusters, key practices, high expectations, and the ninth grade at-risk academy. We are planning to educate 100 of our most high-risk students next year in our curriculum recovery program. I attended the High Schools That Work conference in Florida to learn about the implementation of this ninth-grade academy. We are going to discuss and emphasize the *High Schools That Work* program and strategies at our faculty retreat.

Brad Nathan said, "There used to be money for that, which has dried up considerably, too, professional development money that would enable teachers to go out and get training that they would need in specific areas or do even team training that would be cross-curricular training. I haven't been to the *High Schools That Work* conferences, but I've been to several trips to neighboring states to look at effective high schools at work, a cross-curricular program thing."

Holly Standard remembered, "A quite a bit of professional development was offered to the faculty. We got some during the regular school year, but then there were summer programs that were also offered. I never participated in them because I work in the summer."

Kara Stone said, “People would attend the National Convention and then they discussed and presented it back on site to the other faculty members, and then, maybe, at the district level a little bit. I think both high schools to some extent worked together on some of those things, but we were always, well we had, I think PHS A also had the pre-developed help.”

Valerie Thomas replied, “We actually got a grant for staff development for people. I wrote a teaching application for the teachers, to see who wanted to teach that particular group, because we’re not just going to assign teachers to it.”

Will Severns stated, “Our school will focus on professional development that emphasizes a college track curriculum for our students. Many students need an opportunity to attend the career-tech system. The number one goal of our administration is discipline. Instructional leadership and curriculum development are secondary goals in professional development.”

Wallace Pile complained, “We still have staff development money, but we are focused on curriculum and strategies that raise test scores instead of practicing the *High Schools That Work* strategies.”

Mary Britton said, “Six years ago the School To Work money was available. That’s why we could afford to send so many. Let’s see last summer we took six last summer to SREB and it was even less than that the summer before in Louisville and prior to that we’ve been sending pretty good numbers, but the money’s not there now.”

Wilma Lewis said, “Our *High School That Work* coordinator takes care of testing and professional development conferences. Our administrators will hit the professional

development hard for a week or two and then not mention it again for the rest of the year. For the whole concept to work like it should, the principal should give it full support."

Wanda Crest said, "I think we need more professional development, because I think that some teachers are not quite getting it. I think some of them have been hearing it. Teachers are sometimes just as bad as students. You go to class and you hear, and hear, but until you really get to see the real life correlation that's when motivation comes in."

Kevin Jumper felt, "Professional development is the most important process to train the teachers and implement the program. It made the biggest difference and impact for changes in reaching kids. Teachers were provided in-service, retreats and the opportunity to attend the High Schools That Work national convention."

Organizational and Management Practices

The organizational changes required to support student learning go above and beyond taking advantage of the professional development process. The faculty members, administrators, and students should have the responsibility for making decisions that affect its staff and student learning. Some educators believe those that are closest to the issues and resources make the most effective decisions. The school day should be interrupted as little as possible to allow the maximum amount of learning time and reallocating teaching resources for increasing student achievement.

Dr. Dean said, "My goal is to learn more and bring the faculty up to speed about *High Schools That Work* and good teaching practices. I believe a lack of understanding

by faculty members can lead to a lack of buy-in or implementation. We are having a retreat to educate everyone about the clusters, advisory, and the academy. Our *High Schools That Work* district coordinator has left and so there is a lack of district support and leadership."

Brad Nathan stated:

> Money has been tight lately —other compensation, usually in the way of time or able to get subs so you can go, do something else, but not necessarily—hasn't been a lot of money to flow into a lot of different things lately in the last year or so. We've changed cheerleaders three times in the last three years so—what kind of support are we going to get and those type things? So, it's almost a backwards—retraining the administration. As to the direction and then the end-goal is they take that as their own direction, and then, they want to give lead out. So we're in the teaching phase—I guess for them. So that then they can in turn—set a vision and a course for us.

Holly Standard said, "If the administration encouraged or supported the *High Schools That Work* program, it was fine. But, as soon as they brought in their own priorities, we've seen a difference, we've seen differences, we have seen a change in practices."

Kara Stone was of the opinion that every different administrator implemented different management practices as she explained:

> Well, I've had, I guess three or four different principals. It was always pretty much, teacher-driven under my first principal. They pretty much just trusted people and the faculty felt like they had the authority to choose our curriculum

and make our own choices. Kerry was probably as dynamic as any with High Schools That Work. He was the one who really brought that in, and times were good. The climate has not really changed too much until this year, and I don't know if that has too much to do with *High School That Work*. It doesn't seem to be a strong commitment of Dr. Dean. I know that he is very much committed to advisory.

Valerie Thomas said, "We're just now, getting our strategies going and talking to the eighth graders about this regular development. We've got to build a schedule and wait a little bit. That's kind of a counseling administrative type deal that we're working on. We have about 100 freshmen and then if you look at, you know, we're graduating three something, that's not a good ratio."

Mary Britton said,

Our previous principal, Kerry, who implemented the *High Schools That Work* practices started with a faculty retreat one summer. When we first kicked the thing off, and we had a really large turn out of people that chose to go. It wasn't required—but we had a lot of participants, and we really had more than half the faculty. I'd say maybe close to two-thirds that participated to some level or another. Now, maybe one-third never did jump on the band wagon. After that—let's see last summer we took six is all we sent last summer to SREB, and it was even less than that the summer before in Louisville, because I didn't even go that summer. Prior to that we've been sending pretty good numbers, but there is a small amount of *High Schools to Work* money and the longer you're in the

program the more they dwindle that you get. So now, we have to use our own money.

Wilma Lewis said, “The scheduling of the classes for teachers and students who are members of the clusters has been the biggest hurdle as far as being able to work together. The administrators will hit it hard for a week or two and then not mention it again the rest of the year. For the whole concept to work the principal must give it full support.”

Wanda Crest perceived:

> It’s hard to get together, and half of the problem is the way schools are set up. We’re just not where we can communicate with each other to plan together. That’s one of the biggest downfalls. The person you want to plan with may have a total different plan than you. The only way you can see is if you stay after school, and then, half the time we’re usually involved in something else that’s after—I mean the planning time and having schedules with other teachers, some of these things, it’s almost impossible.

Establishing Linkages

Schools are a place of interest for parents, employers, and organizations all of whom benefit when effective schools prepare students for life and careers. Educators must communicate with the larger community, share their expertise and resources in achieving the school goals.

Dr. Dean said, “The links established with parents and students through our academies will be positive as the students realize they will actually graduate. The clusters allow students, parents, educators, and business community member opportunities to establish win-win linkages. The teacher and student will experience real-world applications while the employer hires a student already trained. The parents are proud of their student graduating, attending college, and getting a job.”

Brad Nathan said, “Establishing linkages are probably the things that are hanging on the most. We are trying to devise new and more effective ways of communicating with the parents. Those things are probably the things that have still held on the most and that are still held on the most and that are still being used effectively in place right now and still being--tweaked and improved on.”

Holly Standard said,

> But, linkage to the business community to hospitals, to doctors, to that was part of the magic. I think what made it so successful was we were putting the kids out for site visits and they were getting to see first hand what it would be like to work in the medical profession. I’m a Spanish teacher and my students would write journals about their favorite part of school and what they did like and many of them in the health cluster would do that, and I would have them volunteer and some of them would coordinate with the health cluster people to get them volunteering for Spanish purposes in a health related field.

Kara Stone said,

> The linkages established are the main reasons the clusters were successful. I just don’t think that if lead teacher and developer of the health cluster hadn’t been

there, along with the district *High Schools That Work* coordinator, and the hospital coordinator, it wouldn't have worked. The three of them put all of the energy and enthusiasm and made it work. Maybe the people that were in charge of the other areas or clusters, were not quite as sold on it or the business partner was not as involved as they should have been, I guess it takes all three. It takes somebody in the school, somebody in the administration, and somebody in the business community to really make it go, in my opinion anyway. It just never did get the leadership that it should in the other areas at our school.

Valerie Thomas said, "It seems like we try and recover the students when they turn 18 and are seniors, but you are right. It starts when they are in the ninth-grade. I mean, keeping those 600 freshmen until graduation instead of 500 and something, is a great idea."

Wallace Pile said, "We meet with our kids in advisory once a week for 30 minutes. We use a curriculum that was put together by a district committee. Dr. Dean also wants every teacher to read a book that is supposed to improve your teaching style and leadership. We come together once a month during a faculty meeting and discuss the chapters in the book."

Mary Britton said,

> To eventually get into the workplace, we want to provide better citizens, better employees. As we talk with the businesses they are telling us that we are sending them pretty lousy kids. Their people skills are awful, their soft skills are awful, and their work ethic just doesn't exist. We need to be working on and preparing better employees for the future.

Wilma Lewis said, “I have noticed as the students become more engaged and motivated in the educational process their parents will also be more supportive. Some of the parents notice a difference in the students’ attitude and academic achievement. The community business owner benefits from the relationship with the students and school because they can show relevance to the students, and communicate their training and educational needs.”

Wanda Crest said,

> The students develop a linkage between the actual work experience and the classroom. Hypertonic solutions in biology and isotonic solutions are really hard for kids to visualize, and we have some labs for them, but after spending almost 30 hours in surgery, and hearing the anesthesiologist explain to them what was going on. They understood why the chemicals were moving into the lungs and then why the chemicals would start moving out of the lungs, and so they were able to finally piece that together.

Monitored and Accelerated Improvement

Educators must be prepared to implement data accountability management systems effectively. The issues that must be understood are the strengths and weaknesses of using data, implementing valuable data-driven evaluations at the school-site level, and transferring data from an administrative record keeping system to data utilized by teachers for improving instructional strategies.

Dr. Dean said,

> One key aspect is to hire another HSTW district coordinator to provide leadership, training, distribute curriculum, and monitor testing. We want 80 percent of our students to pass their exams and achieve high goals. We also need a data system or computer program that allows us to chart our NCA or HSTW goals and evaluate our accomplishments.

Brad Nathan said, “API scores are—they can be misleading—I think they have a good tool—the problem is—getting our students and parents to realize that they are a part of that, too. You know it’s not just our problem, or our job, or our task it’s them along with it, and possible tying in consequences or rewards, as far as, their end-of- instruction testing or those types of things.”

Holly Standard said, “We have a brand new person in charge of the health cluster this year, and I haven’t had any feedback at all this year. The two exceptionally good people who were in charge of it over the last, say, six or seven years that it’s been going on, this year a new person is and I really can’t say whether it is successful or not.”

Kara Stone said, “When the health cluster was active they would have test. There was accountability in some sort. Our site-based *High Schools That Work* coordinator kept the curriculum and portfolio. Sixty seniors had taken some classes identified by the health cluster and tested them with the High Schools That Work standardized tests.”

Valerie Thomas said,

> As far as the district administration, I think anything we can do that’s going to cut the dropout rate and help keep kids in school and get them a little more successful, I think that you’re not going to get any flack from that. I think, right

> now, the only resistance we have is just a lack of enough funds to really do what we'd like to do. If we can prove after a year that we're doing some good and keeping some kids in school, then some funds may just be found to take care of it, too.

Will Severns said, "The federal law, *No Child Left Behind*, will force our school to monitor and evaluate data such as EOI and API scores. Hopefully, our district will repeal the four x four x three mandated curriculum so we can incorporate more *High Schools That Work* practices. We need administrative support and funding to implement the strategies."

Wallace Pile said, "Our focus has changed from making student centered curriculum and instructional decisions that relate to High Schools That Work such as clusters and advisory, to raising test scores."

Mary Britton stated,

> Well, there's *High Schools That Work* money that's federal money that we get to help run our program, but then out of that there are requirements that we have to do like the meeting we went to Tulsa. But, this is also the year I have to do testing, but they give us enough money to test, but just the 60 students. So there's requirements that they make us use that you've got to participate and still be a part of High Schools That Work network that takes money.

Wilma Lewis said, "The *High Schools That Work* money has dwindled and so has the effort to test our students as they complete a cluster. This is unfortunate in today's educational setting where testing is the buzz word for the end-of-instruction and API scores.

Wanda Crest commented,

> The kids that go through our program are likely going to not take that class in college, more than that, they don't need to and have to spend that money, and they're going to get out sooner because they will have not wasted time maybe going after being a radiologist, they've kind of experienced it with their job shadowing tutors and speakers and things like that, and know, I should have been an anesthesiologists. You know, and this program is what this school is about, everything.

The School's Culture

Walk into any school and you may discover the traditions and values that are important. As you view the pictures hanging on the walls, the trophies or plaques in the cases, and the attitudes displayed by teachers and students, the culture becomes apparent. The school's culture can be a fertile environment for the six leadership strategies to be implemented or a resistant environment that stifles change.

Dr. Dean described the school's culture, "it's a place where people do not accept change or implement the six leadership strategies because the right people are not in place and the other faculty members do not understand. Teacher buy-in was initially good, but lack of understanding and teacher turnover leads to the lack of implementation of the practices running out of steam."

Brad Nathan has noticed the changing culture,

I can say we've been at this for years now and the culture is changed. The building that I work in has been a very tight knit group. They have always been that way, but yet over the past eight years several of the older faculty have retired, and in doing so, new people have come on and we've always managed to get good people that come in and become a part of the culture of our school which is very traditional based—with there is just the school pride and the different things that go on, and they adapt to that very well. But, also in doing so they come in, and they have a better grasp of the new way of doing things, new way of presenting material—new way of looking at curriculum not just their own little box but as a bigger picture type thing. So, we've always had a healthy—I—think—atmosphere in the school, but it takes more than that, and, good camaraderie just doesn't make everything. I mean it makes a nice atmosphere to work in, but it doesn't always move you forward in the overall goal of getting things done. Holly Standard has found the culture is resistant to change and that most people are looking for leadership, I think there is a tremendous amount of resistance to change. They are very comfortable where they are and when you're comfortable you don't want to change. Well, your administrator is the one that should, give us direction as a unit of school. And that's right, I mean it could be any program, the one we have right now, I don't think is promoting necessarily *High Schools That Work*, but he is promoting certain ideas and there's tremendous amount of resistance to them. But, people are comfortable and when you're comfortable why change?

Motivated teachers are more likely to produce a culture of change and motivation according to Valerie Thomas,

> I came back here—actually, graduated from there a long time ago, but I came back. I think the whole learning environment for one thing, the faculty is a whole lot more cohesive than the faculty where I've been before. I think they've got higher expectations for themselves. Consequently, they have higher expectations for the kids, very friendly, very professional family as an organization. I've seen which I think is that part of the learning culture, you know. The kids see as camaraderie between faculty member and students, and, you know, it makes it a whole lot more peaceful, friendly environment for the kids to learn.

Will Severn's commented, "Today, the cultural mix at our school reflects the changing demographics of the society at large. In my 13 years in the district, I have seen more minorities move into the district, especially Hispanic students. As our school becomes more diverse, more white people have moved out."

Wallace Pile said that the school's culture is affected by societies' problems as he describes:

> The school's culture can be described as undisciplined regarding the incredible amount of tardies, hall traffic, truancy, and absenteeism. The administration will let you talk openly. I mean they don't have a problem. Now, whether they take—use your opinion, that is up to them. But, no, they don't mind suggestions. I think 80 percent of the faculty would do pretty much anything that is suggested. I think we have good collaboration, but implementation of these strategies could improve.

The cultural battles between the new and the old ways of doing things are present as stated by Mary Britton,

> I've heard for a long time from my teacher friends there is always a new concept coming around the corner, and this is the best thing since sliced bread—we are going to do this and then by the time you begin to learn it—it's already gone by the wayside, and something else new and better is coming along. So many of the old guard people, we pretty much burn out and don't want to try anything new and—what I've done for 30 years has worked just fine—I'm not changing now.

Wilma Lewis said, "Most of our faculty members are interested in improving instructional and teaching strategies. There a few that will run off worksheets and only use textbooks for lessons, but most teachers want to make education relevant to their students. The district administration and site-based administrators must provide the resources and support to make the High Schools That Work successful."

Wanda Crest said, "I have not worked in a better school than Public High School B. I've not worked in a better school administrative-wise and some of your top teachers that are so interested in being involved and being willing to try new things and more innovative improved ideas. In our school you always have fuddy-duds, I would have to say the percentages of fuddy-duds that we have is extremely low compared to what you would have in most schools."

Summary

In this chapter the data are analyzed and presented as two case studies to describe the grid and group makeup of both schools that are practicing the six school improvement strategies, to study what influences the educational leadership to implement the strategies, and describe the relationship of grid and group in the decision-making process to implement the school improvement strategies. Using the information from the questionnaires and interviews, I described the grid and group characteristics of each school. These descriptions were linked to reported leadership strategies and common literature.

Scoring for the questionnaire was based upon 11 grid and 11 group consideration statements with forced choices for each. All low grid and group responses received minus one point, and high grid responses received one point. For each questionnaire I calculated a sum of positive and negative grid and group scores and totaled the individual grid and group responses (see Appendix G).

CHAPTER V

Analysis of the Case Studies

In this chapter the data are analyzed and presented as two case studies to describe the grid and group makeup of both schools that are practicing the six school improvement strategies, to study what influences the educational leadership to implement the strategies, and describe the relationship of grid and group in the decision-making process to implement the school improvement strategies. Using the information from the questionnaires and interviews, I described the grid and group characteristics of each school.

Scoring for the questionnaire was based upon 11 grid and 11 group consideration statements with forced choices for each. All low grid and group responses received minus one point, and high grid responses received one point. For each questionnaire I calculated a sum of positive and negative grid and group scores and totaled the individual grid and group responses (see Appendix G). Making connections to the reported leadership strategies and common literature were assembled using the information from the questionnaires and interviews.

Public High School A (PHS A)

An explanation will be given regarding the ways in which the interview data, leadership strategies, and the questionnaire responses indicate that this is a high grid and high group Corporate culture. The explanation will focus on role status, individual autonomy, insider-outsider rules, group survival, and high group allegiance (Harris, 1995).

Grid Questionnaire Results

A total of 72 out of 92 faculty members completed the grid and group questionnaire (see Appendix F). There were 42% of the responses in the low grid category, while 58% indicated high grid. The following grid responses as shown in Table 5.1 are listed in numerical order along with the number of responses and percentages.

Table 5.1

PHS A Grid Responses

Grid Considerations	Low Grid	Low Grid
1. Authority structures are centralized.	12 (27%)	60 (83%)
2. Work and labor activities are directed by administrators.	33 (46%)	39 (54%)
3. There is a mandated curriculum.	15 (21%)	57 (79%)
4. Individual teachers have no autonomy in generating goals.	47 (65%)	25 (35%)
5. Instructional strategies are determined by administrators.	58 (81%)	14 (19%)
6. Curricular decisions are prescribed by administrators.	30 (41%)	42 (59%)
7. Instructional materials are allotted by administrators.	32 (44%)	40 (56%)

Table 5.1 (continued)

Grid Considerations	Low Grid	Low Grid
8. Teaching assignments are assigned by administrators.	21 (28%)	51 (72%)
9. Teachers are motivated by institutional rewards.	61 (85%)	11 (15%)
10. Hiring decisions are controlled by administrators.	10 (14%)	62 (86%)
11. Classes are scheduled by institutional routines.	10 (14%)	62 (86%)

Seventy two participants from PHS A responded to the questionnaire. The scores were tallied by totaling the assigned value for each answer both positive and negative. The score in the high grid category was given a +1 when the respondent agreed with the statement. The score in the low grid category was given a -1 when the respondent disagreed with the statement. Grid refers to the individual effort or work compared to group or a team.

Statement one refers to reporting to the line of authority as centralized, the hierarchal group. The total score was 60 (83%) high grid (respondents agreed) and 12 (17%) low grid (respondents disagreed) with the method used in reporting to the line of authority of centralized structures. Statement two, the work and labors activities directed by administrators, had a total high grid score of 39 (54%) and a total low grid score of 33 (46%). Statement three, a mandated curriculum for teachers, had a total high grid score of 57 (79%) and a total low grid score of 15 (21%). Statement four, individual teachers have no autonomy in generating goals, had a total high grid score of 25 (35%) and a total low grid score of 47 (65%). Statement five, instructional strategies are determined by administrators, had a total high grid score of 14 (19%) and total low grid score of 58 (81%). Statement six, curricular decisions are prescribed by administrators, had a total high grid score of 42 (59%) and a total low grid score of 30 (41%). Statement seven,

institutional materials are allotted by administrators, had a total high grid score of 40 (56%) and a total low grid score of 32 (44%). Statement eight, teaching assignments are assigned by administrators, had a total high grid score of 51 (72%) and a total low grid score of 21 (28%). Statement nine, teachers are motivated by institutional rewards, had a total high grid score of 11 (15%) and a total low grid score of 61 (85%). Statement ten, hiring decisions are determined by administrators, had a total high grid score of 62 (86%) and a total low grid score of 10 (14%). Statement eleven, classes are scheduled by institutional routines, had a total high grid score of 62 (86%) and a total low grid score of 10 (14%).

Group Questionnaire Results

There were 37% of the responses in the low group category, while 63% indicated high group. The following group responses as shown in Table 5.2 are listed in numerical order along with the number of responses and percentages.

Table 5.2

PHS A Group Responses

Grid Considerations	Low Grid	Low Grid
1. Activities are planned by teachers and administrators	13 (18%)	52 (82%)
2. Social Activities and work are commingled.	41 (57%)	31 (43%)
3. Rewards are group focused payoff.	36 (50%)	36 (50%)
4. Work is organized for group goals.	22 (31%)	50 (69%)
5. Productivity is evaluated according to group priorities.	33 (46%)	39 (54%)
6. Teachers work collaboratively toward group goals.	19 (27%)	53 (73%)

Table 5.2 (continued)

Grid Considerations	Low Grid	Low Grid
7. Curricular goals are group generated.	14 (20%)	58 (80%)
8. Instructional resources are corporately controlled.	27 (37%)	45 (63%)
9. Communication flows through corporate network.	31 (43%)	41 (57%)
10. Teacher success is evaluated to group goals.	39 (54%)	33 (46%)
11. Authority is corporate with accountability.	20 (28%)	52 (72%)

The scores are tallied by totaling the assigned value for each answer both positive and negative. The score in the high group category is given a +1 when the respondent agrees with the statement. The score in the low group category is given a -1 when the respondent disagrees with the statement. Group refers to the group effort or work compared to individual effort.

Statement one refers to activities are planned by teachers and administrators. The total score was 59 (82%) high group (agree) and 13 (18%) low group (disagree). Statement two, refers to social activities and work are commingled, which had a total high group score of 31 (43%) and a total low group of 41 (57%). Statement three, rewards are group focused payoff, which had a total high group score of 36 (50%) and a total low group score of 36 (50%). Statement four, work is organized for group goals, had a total high group score of 50 (69%) and a total low group score of 22 (31%). Statement five, productivity evaluated according to group priorities, had a total high group score of 39 (54%) and total low group score of 33 (46%). Statement six, teachers work collaboratively toward group goals, had a total high group score of 53 (73%) and a total low group score of 19 (27%). Statement seven, curricular goals are group generated, had a total high group score of 58 (80%) and a total low group score of 22 (20%). Statement

eight, instructional resources are corporately controlled, had a total high group score of 45 (63%) and a total low group score of 27 (37%). Statement nine, communication flows through corporate network, had a total high group score of 41 (57%) and a total low group score of 31 (43%). Statement ten, teacher success evaluated to group goals, had a total high group score of 33 (46%) and a low group score of 39 (54%). Statement eleven, authority is corporate with accountability, had a total high group score of 52 (72%) and a low group score of 20 (28%).

The dynamic forces of grid and group are concurrent and working at PHS A. Figure 1 below depicts the averages that were tallied from the grid and group questionnaires.

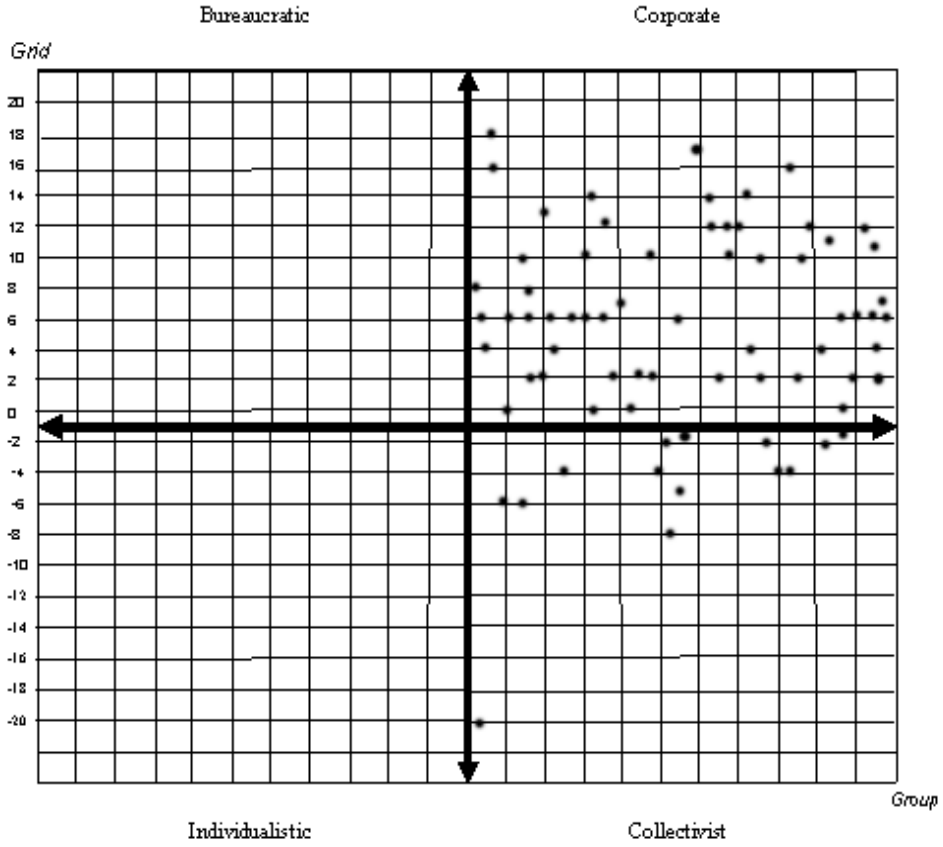

Figure 1. PHS A Grid and Group Averages

Seventy two participants responded to the questionnaire. The responses were tallied, averaged, and plotted on the scatter plot in Figure 1. The majority of the responses were plotted as high grid and high group which falls within the Corporate quadrant (high grid/high group) and has the following characteristics:

- Emphasis on clearly defined job description, and achieved role status
- The administration determines the schools' objectives and curriculum
- Strict insider-outsider rules
- Group survival
- High allegiance to the group (Harris, 1995).

High Grid Characteristics

High grid refers to a social context in which an explicit set of institutional procedures limit individual interactions, choices and autonomy (Douglas, 1982). The high grid concept is parallel to the number of shelves in an antique roll-top desk. Located inside the desk are a bunch of little drawers at the top which may have numerous storage shelves for sorting items such as pens, paperclips, and paper. There is pressure to keep everything in its place, and there are specific rules for removing and storing each item. For example, in PHS A there are role distinctions between a principal and a teacher which is a high grid characteristic (Lingenfelter, 1992). Four criteria are used by Douglas (1982) to determine grid: insulation, autonomy, control, and competition.

Insulation. The principal is the prominent figure among the teachers, parents, and community members. The principal is considered isolated and insulated from the school community which is a high grid characteristic. For example, the principal's office was isolated in the northeast corner of the school making it more difficult for public access without going through the proper chain of command. The secretary was responsible for screening the principal's telephone calls and making appointments. Chris Harold describes the role status among the faculty and administration, "The principal is somewhat isolated."

Autonomy. The administration determines the schools' objectives and curriculum focus with limited individual autonomy. The amount of individual autonomy which is a high grid characteristic for all teachers in selecting curriculum and instructional strategies, is limited and has declined because the principal has been increasing rules, regulations, agreements, and procedures for faculty members to improve EOI and API scores.

Control. The principal's control in the school at the top of the hierarchy or row, with unique value and power is considered to be one of the few academic experts (Harris, 1995). The school's objectives are established by the principal and organized by consensus leadership. The educational leadership seeks consensus on the activities and schedule, and assigns tasks and responsibilities according to interests. The educational leaders is accountable to the principal.

Competition. The educational leadership is working together as a team to implement the school improvement strategies. This creates less competition for implementing an individual teacher's goal that is not aligned with the principals or school's objectives.

Emphasis on Clearly Defined Job Description, and Achieved Role Status

Within the Corporate (high grid) school culture of PHS A the hierarchal role status is an important characteristic that is determined by the school and has strict specialization of who may do what role (Fraiser, 2005). The school is organized around several hierarchal levels for planning and implementing the school's objectives.

The principal is responsible for establishing the school's vision and objectives without a lot of competition from the school community within the Corporate culture. After the principal establishes the goals, the school improvement committee is responsible for planning, coordinating, and implementing the school improvement strategies. The school improvement committee focuses on creating the mission statement and establishing a process to measure and evaluate the goals. Corrine Joslin stated that during the implementation process, "The principal must provide the support and resources for the site-leadership team in charge of implementing the goals and monitoring student achievement."

The department chairpersons who are located below the principal within the hierarchy achieved their position based on experience, leadership, and seniority. Nick Mann stated, "The department chairpersons who are in the leadership roles in our high

school have gone out and made an effort to bring everyone on board, and that's allowed the teachers to have better buy-in to implement the strategies." The interdependence of the principal, school improvement committee, department chairpersons, and teachers working together as a team is a characteristic of the Corporate culture, and this creates less competition among individual departments and faculty members.

Teachers are located below the department chairpersons within the Corporate hierarchy but are considered to have academic expertise within their areas of certification. The amount of individual autonomy which is a high grid characteristic for all teachers in selecting curriculum and instructional strategies is limited because the principal has been increasing rules, regulations, agreements, and procedures for faculty members to improve EOI and API scores. The stress of meeting API and NCLB has changed our instructional focus from career planning to increase the test scores as Tonya Simes said, "We won't know until next year if it's effective, but we have been looking at all our test scores, and our teachers are aware where we need improvement."

The Administration Determines the Schools' Objectives and Curriculum Focus

The principal's focuses of meeting the requirements of NCLB have permeated the chain of command to other faculty members. In this high grid culture, the proper channels are followed for confronting or delegating by the administrators, department chairpersons, and teachers. The value of following the chain of command is a characteristic of the Corporate culture where it is the obligation to the subordinate or superior to those above or below their role status (Harris, 2005). For example, the

administrators are holding the teachers accountable to cover PASS and implement reading strategies daily in their instructional strategies to improve EOI scores. The educational leadership has implemented organizational practices that are aligned to raise student achievement and EOI and API scores. All educators are under pressure to raise student test scores as Tonya Simes explained, “The stress of meeting the API and No Child Left Behind has changed our instructional focus from career planning to increase test scores. We are charting the end-of-instruction and API scores.”

The educational leadership has planned and encouraged faculty members to attend professional development workshops for training that is aligned to the school’s objectives which is another high grid practice. The principal is responsible for providing monetary and other tangible resources for faculty members to increase reading and writing skills and raise student achievement. The Corporate culture encourages collaborative dialogue, professional and personal interaction, and emphasizes the interdependence and enhancement of professional development among teachers, administrators, and school community members (Harris, 2005). Harry Nile said, “You get more buy-in through professional development. The leadership, and that’s the key in that. It’s got to have total buy-in.”

The principal is responsible to control the process for implementing the leadership strategies, but accountability for implementing the school improvement strategies and improving the EOI and API scores is shared by all of the school’s academic experts and educational leadership which includes the principal, assistant principals, department chairpersons, and teachers. Teachers are held accountable for creating a chart listing the strengths and weaknesses of the students’ most recent EOI scores. Data are no longer just

"recorded" in the teacher's grade book but is shared with other faculty members to improve instructional strategies. Data should be used to improve instructional strategies as Brenda Lynn stated, "We have been working on our school profile last year, identifying strategies that we could do to actually increase student achievement, improve student-centered learning, make it more academically challenging for all career-tech and college bound students, and raise EOI scores." Teachers who are considered academic experts in their certification areas are responsible for improving their instructional practices to improve the areas of weakness and meet the objectives established by the school improvement committee, which is a high grid consideration. Teachers used charts, test scores, and data to demonstrate that the strategies are improving student achievement. Brenda Lynn stated, "It is important for the teachers to see improvement as far as scores on the EOI exams."

High Group Characteristics

Strict insider-outsider rules, Group survival, and High Allegiance to the Group

High group represents a social environment that the survival of the group is more important than the survival of the individual members within it. The group holds specific guidelines for membership and protects the groups against outsiders' influence. High group requires a long-term commitment by the members to uphold the values of the group or evolve into outsiders themselves. The members are expected to act not for individual purpose but for the benefit and the interests of its members (Gross & Rayner,

1985). Intrinsic relationships and linkages are important in high group environments. Social interaction and work related activities are combined into the larger group components of faculty members, administrators, students, and community members. Collaboration and teamwork are viewed as win/win for everyone with the school community or group (Harris, 2005).

Historically, the strict insider-outsider rules have been important within PHS A and were based on high academic standards. Traditionally, faculty members began their teaching careers in one of the district's junior high schools and were eventually promoted to PHS A where they taught until they retired. High group cultures are tightly held together with privileges that are not available to those outside the group. According to Kuhn and Whitt (1988), culture is described as the lens through which organizational members interpret and make meaningful their involvement in a group. Administrators followed the same career path, starting their careers as junior high administrators within the district and eventually were promoted to PHS A. Educators linked their personal identity with the school, and felt the school was taking responsibility for their personal well-being (Harris, 2005). Teachers and administrators hired from within the district are more likely to respect the allegiance among faculty members. Faculty members consider the emphasis of academic and athletic traditions as an important boundary against outsiders who may not support the group considerations. The "family" feeling was apparent within the school's culture among a small group of teachers who practiced the strict insider-outsider rules. The emphasis on group survival and high allegiance within this school has traditionally been a priority. High group societies are concerned for the group, have many mutual interests, and participate in activities together (Lingenfelter,

1998). Teachers and administrators have been identified and respected as a select group of faculty members within PHS A, which had the reputation of an exemplary school.

PHS A has a rich tradition of faculty allegiance for high expectations and student motivation. Nick Mann held the opinion that faculty members focus on implementing the school improvement strategies as he stated, “I think there’s a true desire to implement the six leadership strategies, and I think the teachers want to, and do.” High expectations have been the benchmark used by many teachers in their classroom instructional strategies. According to Harris (1995), “In high group social environments, there are specific membership criteria, explicit pressure to consider group relationships, and the survival of the group becomes more important than the survival of individual members within it” (p. 621). Increasing student motivation was the standard and goal for many teachers as they were allowed to implement clusters, advisory, credit recovery, and other school improvement strategies with the goal of bringing recognition to the school.

The professional development process has become focused on the principal’s objectives for the school year. For example, Mark Forget’ was hired by the principal to train faculty members to implement his reading strategies to improve instructional strategies that raise reading and writing scores. Other personnel from EDIT were hired to assist teachers in the alignment of PASS within their daily lesson plans. This is a high group consideration because the focus of the professional development process is on training the individual teachers to implement the school improvement strategies.

The principal has begun the process of implementing management and organizational practices that provide common planning times and assessments for those teachers involved in the EOI testing areas. Faculty members value the collaboration of

and other resources that are used to meet the school's objectives. The principal has determined that using data should be a collaborative focus among teachers to monitor EOI results and improve instructional strategies. Teachers are being held accountable for creating curriculum mapping, scope and sequence, and charting EOI testing results. The focus on promoting teacher collaboration through common planning times and common assessments reinforces the strong group classification that includes unity among teachers and administrators, communication with the community, and strong corporate association and identification (Harris, 2005). Individual teachers celebrate their own individual students' EOI scores and the school's API scores together.

The top five high grid responses selected as shown in Table 5.3 are listed with examples that were discovered through multiple sources of data.

Table 5.3

PHS A Top Five Grid Responses

High Grid Responses	Examples
#10: Hiring decisions are controlled by administration (86%).	The principal, assistant principal, and department chairperson are on the interview committee. The principal has created a list of interview questions to ask the interviewee. After the interview, the principal completes a hiring letter and the personnel director calls and offers the interviewee a job.
#11: Classes are scheduled by institutional standards (86%).	The principal and counselor prepare the master schedule. Class sized are set at a minimum of 25 students. The principal determines the number of sections, room allocation, and the master schedule.

Table 5.3 (continued)

#1: Authority structures are centralized (83%).	The principal reports to the assistant superintendents; assistant principals and counselors report to the principal; chairperson report to the counselors and assistants principals; teachers report to their department chairpersons.
#3: Individual teachers have no autonomy in curriculum selection (79%).	The teachers complete a rubric to select a textbook. The textbook must include PASS and many include EOI test bank questions. Forge's reading strategies are used within the daily curriculum.
#6: Curricular decisions are prescribed by the administrator(s) (59%)	The principal assigns teaching placements, room assignments, and planning times.

The top five high group responses selected as shown in Table 5.4 are listed with examples that were discovered through multiple sources of data.

Table 5.4

PHS A Top Five Group Responses

High Group Responses	Examples
#1: Work activities are planned by the collective group of teachers and administrators 82%	The activities director, assistant principal, and principal prepare the school calendar and other activities

Table 5.4 (continued)

High Group Responses	Examples
#7: Curricular goals are group generated (80%).	The site improvement team generates the mission statement and 3 or 4 objectives for the year. The goals previously included implementing six clusters, advisory, and credit recovery. The focus has changed to implementing Forge's reading strategies, and PASS with the objectives of raising EOI and API Scores.
#6: Teachers work collaboratively toward instructional goals and objectives (73%).	Teachers were placed on committees to collaborate together to implement the six clusters and advisory. Teachers worked with their department when implementing Forge's reading strategies, creating common assessments, and raising EOI and API Scores.
#11: Authority is clear and corporate with much accountability to members (72%).	There is a chain of command that is expected to be followed. Teachers report to the department chairperson; department chairperson reports to the assistant principal; the assistant principals' report to the principal.
#4: Work is organized for group goals and interests (69%).	The site-improvement team determines the focus and objectives. The teachers are expected to implement the objectives.

Summary

In summary, the PHS A administration maintained its high grid control in the hiring process, selection of curriculum and textbooks, the chain of command, and requiring teachers to forfeit their individual autonomy to implement instructional strategies that met the school's objectives.

The administration also encouraged high group influence over the work activities, planned for the development of educational leadership, focused on group generated curricular goals, encouraged collaboration among teachers for instructional strategies and common assessments, and increased accountability for educational leaders.

Public High School B (PHS B)

An explanation will be given regarding the ways in which the interview data, leadership strategies, and the questionnaire responses indicate that this is a high grid and high group Corporate culture. The explanation will focus on role status, individual autonomy, insider-outsider rules, group survival, and high group allegiance (Harris, 1995).

Grid and Group Questionnaire Results

A total of 49 out of 99 faculty members completed the grid and group questionnaire (see Appendix F). There were 42% responses in the low grid category, while 58% indicated high grid. The following grid responses as shown in Table 5.5 are listed in numerical order along with the number of responses and percentages.

Table 5.5

PHS B Grid Responses

Grid Considerations	Low Grid	Low Grid
1. Authority structures are centralized.	9 (28%)	40 (82%)
2. Work and labor activities are directed by administrators.	29 (59%)	20 (41%)
3. There is a mandated curriculum.	20 (41%)	29 (59%)
4. Individual teacher's have no autonomy in generating goals.	26 (53%)	23 (47%)
5. Instructional strategies are determined by administrators.	48 (98%)	1 (2%)
6. Curricular decisions are prescribed by administrators.	24 (49%)	25 (51%)
7. Instructional materials are allotted by administrators.	15 (30%)	34 (70%)
8. Teaching assignments are assigned by administrators.	13 (26%)	36 (74%)
9. Teachers are motivated by institutional rewards.	48 (97%)	1 (3%)
10. Hiring decisions are controlled by administrators.	1 (3%)	48 (97%)
11. Classes are scheduled by institutional routines.	4 (8%)	4 (92%)

Forty nine participants from PHS B responded to the questionnaire (see Appendix F). The scores were tallied by totaling the assigned value for each answer both positive and negative. The score in the high grid category was given a +1 when the respondent agreed with the statement. The score in the low grid category is given a -1 when the

respondent disagrees with the statement. Grid refers to the individual effort or work compared to group or a team.

Statement one refers to reporting to the line of authority as centralized, the hierarchal group. The total score was 40 (82%) high grid (agree) and 9 (18%) low grid (disagree) with the method used in reporting to the line of authority. Statement two, the work and labors activities directed by administrators, had a total high grid score of 20 (41%) and a total low grid of 29 (59%). Statement three, a mandated curriculum for teachers, had a total high grid score of 29 (59%) and a total low grid score of 20 (41%). Statement four, individual teachers have no autonomy in generating goals, had a total high grid score of 23 (47%) and a total low grid score of 26 (53%). Statement five, instructional strategies are determined by administrators, had a total high grid score of 1 (2%) and total low grid score of 48 (98%). Statement six, curricular decisions are prescribed by administrators, had a total high grid score of 25 (51%) and a total low grid score of 24 (49%). Statement seven, institutional materials are allotted by administrators, had a total high grid score of 34 (70%) and a total low grid score of 15 (30%). Statement eight, teaching assignments are assigned by administrators, had a total high grid score of 36 (74%) and a total low grid score of 13 (26%). Statement nine, teachers are motivated by institutional rewards, had a total high grid score of 1 (3%) and a total low grid score of 48 (97%). Statement ten, hiring decisions are determined by administrators, had a total high grid score of 48 (97%) and a low grid score of 1 (3%). Statement eleven, classes are scheduled by institutional routines, had a total high grid score of 45 (92%) and a total low grid score of 4 (8%).

Group Questionnaire Results

There were 43% of the responses in the low group category, while 57% indicated high group. The following group responses as shown in Table 5.6 are listed in numerical order along with the number of responses and percentages.

Table 5.6

PHS B Group Responses

Group Considerations	Low Grid	Low Grid
1. Activities are planned by teachers and administrators	9 (18%)	40 (82%)
2. Social Activities and work are commingled.	28 (57%)	21 (43%)
3. Rewards are group focused payoff.	24 (50%)	25 (50%)
4. Work is organized for group goals.	15 (31%)	34 (69%)
5. Productivity is evaluated according to group priorities.	23 (46%)	26 (54%)
6. Teachers work collaboratively toward group goals.	13 (27%)	36 (73%)
7. Curricular goals are group generated.	10 (20%)	39 (80%)
8. Instructional resources are corporately controlled.	18 (37%)	31 (63%)
9. Communication flows through corporate network.	21 (43%)	28 (57%)
10. Teacher success is evaluated to group goals.	26 (54%)	23 (46%)
11. Authority is corporate with accountability.	14 (28%)	35 (72%)

Forty nine participants from PHS B responded to the questionnaire. The scores were tallied by totaling the assigned value for each answer both positive and negative. The score in the high group category is given a +1 when the respondent agreed with the statement. The score in the low group category were given a -1 when the respondent

disagreed with the statement. Group refers to the group effort or work compared to individual effort.

Statement one refers to activities are planned by teachers and administrators. The total score was 40 (82%) high group (agree) and 9 (18%) low group (disagree). Statement two, social activities and work are commingled, had a total high group score of 21 (43%) and a total low group of 28 (57%). Statement three, rewards are group focused payoff, had a total high group score of 25 (50%) and a total low group score of 24 (50%). Statement four, work is organized for group goals, had a total high group score of 34 (69%) and a total low group score of 15 (31%). Statement five, productivity evaluated according to group priorities, had a total high group score of 25 (54%) and total low group score of 24 (46%). Statement six, teachers work collaboratively toward group goals, had a total high group score of 36 (73%) and a total low group score of 13 (27%). Statement seven, curricular goals are group generated, had a total high group score of 39 (80%) and a total low group score of 10 (20%). Statement eight, instructional resources are corporately controlled, had a total high group score of 31 (63%) and a total low group score of 18 (37%). Statement nine, communication flows through corporate network, had a total high group score of 28 (57%) and a total low group score of 21 (43%). Statement ten, teacher success evaluated to group goals, had a total high group score of 23 (46%) and a low group score of 26 (54%). Statement eleven, authority is corporate with accountability, had a total high group score of 35 (72%) and a low group score of 14 (28%).

The dynamic forces of grid and group are concurrent and working at PHS B. Figure 2 below depicts the averages that were tallied from the grid and group questionnaires.

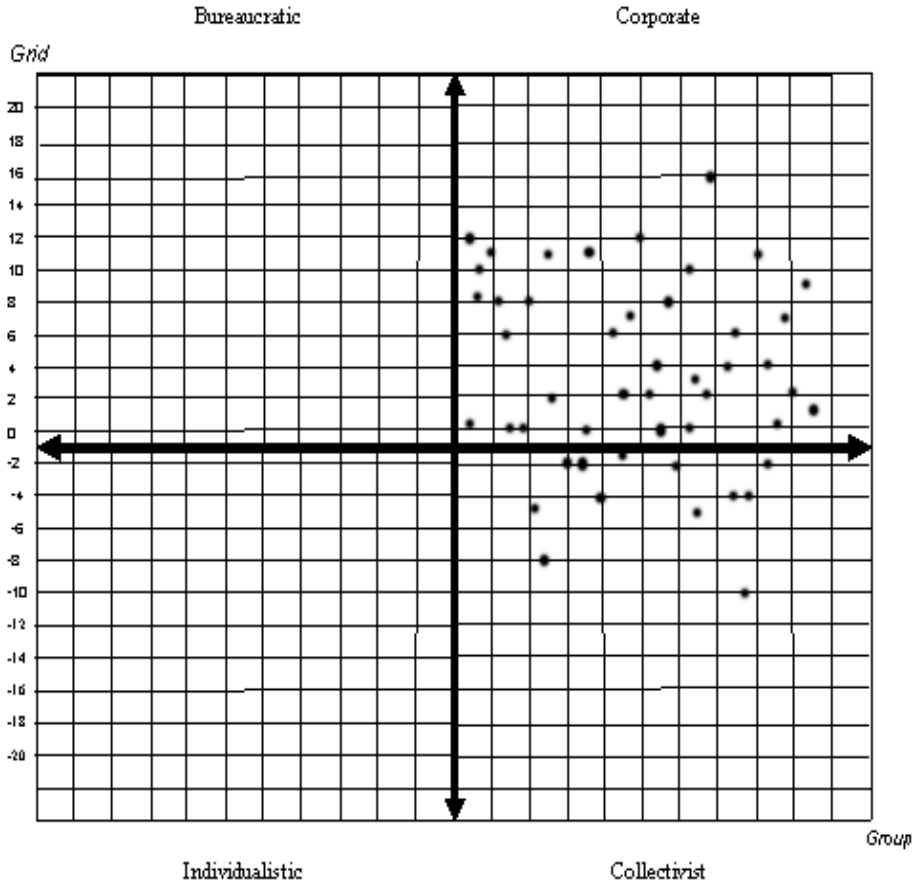

Figure 2. PHS B Grid and Group Averages.

Forty nine participants responded to the questionnaire. The responses were tallied, averaged, and plotted on the scatter plot in Figure 2. The majority of the responses were plotted as high grid and high group which falls within the Corporate quadrant (high grid/high group) and has the following characteristics:

- Emphasis on clearly defined job description, and achieved role status
- The administration determines the school's objectives and curriculum focus
- Strict insider-outsider rules

- Group survival
- High allegiance to the group (Harris, 1995)

High Grid Characteristics

High grid refers to a social context in which an explicit set of institutional procedures limit individual interactions, choices and autonomy (Douglas, 1982). The high grid concept is parallel to the number of shelves in an antique roll-top desk. Located inside the desk are a bunch of little drawers at the top which may have numerous storage shelves for sorting items such as pens, paperclips, and paper. There is pressure to keep everything in its place, and there are specific rules for removing and storing each item. For example, in PHS B there are role distinctions between a principal and a teacher which is a high grid characteristic (Lingenfelter, 1992). Four criteria are used by Douglas (1982) to determine grid: insulation, autonomy, control, and competition.

Insulation. The principal is a prominent figure in the school at the top of the hierarchy, with value and power and is considered to be one of the few academic experts (Harris, 1995). For example, this hierarchy is observed as you enter the school. The principal's office is insulated by student greeters, a large counter, and a secretary who is responsible for setting appointments and screening telephone calls. Holly Standard stated, "Our principal is the one with power who is in control that should, give us direction as a unit of school." The principal who operates within a specialized role will determine the objectives for the entire school.

Autonomy. The faculty members at PHS B have experienced decreasing individual autonomy while choosing curriculum and insulation from accountability as the principal's focus and priorities have changed because of NCLB. The principal is holding the team of assistant principals, department chairpersons, and teachers accountable to improve the EOI and API scores by increasing the amount of reading and writing instructional strategies across the curriculum indicating a high grid environment. The principal has encouraged linkages with outside resources to train faculty members in reading and writing strategies that are proven to increase EOI and API scores. Faculty members are required to attend workshops and professional development opportunities that were deemed important by the principal.

Control. The principal's control in the school at the top of the hierarchy or row, with unique value and power is considered to be one of the few academic experts (Harris, 1995). The school's objectives are established by the principal and organized by consensus leadership. The educational leadership seeks consensus on the activities and schedule, and assigned tasks and responsibilities according to interests. The educational leaders are accountable to the principal.

Competition. The educational leadership is working together as a team to implement the school improvement strategies. This creates less competition for implementing an individual teacher's goal that is not aligned with the principals or school's objectives.

Emphasis on Clearly Defined Job Description, and Achieved Role Status

Within the Corporate (high grid) school culture of PHS B the hierarchal role status is an important characteristic. The school has strict specialization of who may do what role (Fraiser, 2005). The school is organized around several hierarchal levels for establishing, planning, and implementing the school's objectives. In our Corporate schools there are distinctions between a principal and a teacher which is a high grid characteristic (Lingenfelter, 1992).

There are several high grid characteristics observed in the school's Corporate culture. After the principal establishes the objectives the school improvement committee located at the next level of the hierarchy is responsible to coordinate the implementation process through scheduled meetings and established standards. Faculty members who serve on the school improvement committee are considered to be educational experts among the teaching staff. The school improvement committee established the mission statement, implementation process, and the evaluation process for the goals. Wanda Crest said, "I have not worked in a better school than Public High School B. I've not worked in a better school administrative-wise and some of your top teachers that are so interested in being involved and being willing to work together to achieve the school's objectives."

The departments' chairpersons at PHS B have an important role in communicating and linking with the other faculty members based on their leadership and seniority. Brad Nathan commented, "There's a lead teacher that kind of leads within a school, and we give out information and try to keep people working together. The principals are cheerleaders, and they try to give us what we need to make things work in

the classroom, as well as, time to plan, time to do what we need to do." The interdependence of the school improvement committee members, department chairpersons, teachers, and administrators following the established rules and working together create less competition. Many of the department chairpersons at PHS B serve their roles with high expectations and long-term capacities until retirement. Many faculty members' identification with PHS B encourages less competition and faculty turnover and a greater feeling of a "family" atmosphere. According to Valerie Thomas, "The kids see as camaraderie between faculty member and students, and, you know, it makes it a whole lot more peaceful, friendly environment for the kids to learn."

The Administration Determines the Schools' Objectives and Curriculum Focus

The principal has the responsibility of communicating the progress for achieving the school's objectives and testing data results by providing a "state of the school address" for faculty members and students. The testing data are disaggregated and performance charts are disbursed to the department chairperson or teacher in charge of administering an EOI exam. There is little competition among the teachers who administer the EOI exam because all are required to create a chart listing the strengths and weaknesses of the students tested and provide a copy to the principal. Teachers are responsible for improving their instructional practices to meet the objectives established by the principal.

High Group Characteristics

Strict insider-outsider rules, High Allegiance to the Group, and Group Allegiance

The strict insider-outsider rules have been influential within PHS B throughout its history based on the tradition of its high academic standards and high group consideration. Traditionally, faculty members taught in one of the district's junior high schools and were then promoted to PHS B where they taught until they retired. Many administrators followed the same promotional track starting their careers as junior high administrators and eventually were promoted to PHS B. The process of hiring teachers and administrators from inside the school system contributes to positive attributes among faculty members along with encouraging a family atmosphere and fewer changes in academic and athletic traditions.

The emphasis of group survival and high allegiance to group is a characteristic that has always been a priority in PHS B. Teachers and administrators have always been identified and respected as a result of their group membership in this exemplary school. Brad Nathan stated, "The building that I work in has been a very tight knit group. They have always been that way. New people have come on, and we've always managed to get good people that come in and become a part of the culture of our school which is very traditional based—with there is just the school pride and the different things that go on, and they adapt to that very well." PHS B has a proud group of alumni who still have an interest in the traditions of academic and athletic excellence.

High expectations have been the "rule" throughout the school's history and the benchmark used by many teachers in their classroom instructional strategies. Increasing student motivation was the goal for many teachers as they implemented clusters, advisory, AP classes, ninth-grade academies, and other school improvement strategies with the goal of bringing recognition to the school. According to Wallace Pile, higher expectations today focus on raising test scores because of NCLB. Wallace said, "Dr. Dean wants to increase the expectations for our testing, and so, we have a bunch of teachers that meet together—a steering committee that meets to come up with ideas to improve our end-of-instruction test scores."

Administrators and teachers have the reputation within the community as being superior to PHS A in the areas of academic excellence and traditional school pride. Individual association was previously, to a large extent, derived from group membership. Teachers and faculty members are still viewed "as a family."

Faculty members have begun to understand the relevance of the professional development process. Kevin Jumper commented, "Professional development is the most important process to train the teachers and implement the program. It made the biggest difference and impact for changes in reaching kids." The faculty members stated that they had plenty of experience and knowledge to train other faculty members in curriculum, instructional strategies, and raising student achievement. Professional development activities were previously determined by the individual teacher's interests and goals, but the professional development process has become centered on the principal's objectives for the school year. Wanda Crest said, "I think we need more professional development,

because until you really get to see the real life correlation that's when motivation comes in."

The principal has begun the process of providing management and organizational practices that improve student achievement and meet the requirements of NCLB, by hiring an assistant principal to coordinate the implementation of the school improvement strategies and objectives. The principal has determined that using data should be a collaborative focus among teachers to monitor EOI results and improve instructional strategies. Teachers are held responsible for creating curriculum mapping, scope and sequence, and charting EOI testing results. Wallace Pile said, "The administration will let you talk openly. I mean they don't have a problem. Now, whether they take—use your opinion that is up to them. But, no, they don't mind suggestions. I think 80 percent of the faculty would do pretty much anything that is suggested. I think we have good collaboration, but implementation of these strategies could improve."

Improving communication by building linkages with the alumni and other community members is still important and is accomplished through the local school foundation. Wilma Lewis said, "I have noticed as the students become more engaged and motivated in the educational process their parents will also be more supportive. Some of the parents notice a difference in the students' attitude and academic achievement. The community business owner benefits from the relationship with the students and school because they can show relevance to the students, and communicate their training and educational needs."

The organizational practices of creating schools within a school and flexible time schedules are some of the strategies that were implemented within the school's culture.

For example, the ninth grade academies have become popular with students and parents because they meet the at-risk students' needs. Another strategy that may be implemented is requiring students who are failing classes to stay on Friday for tutoring and makeup work.

Will Severns said, "The federal law, No Child Left Behind, will force our school to monitor and evaluate data such as EOI and API scores. We need administrative support and funding to implement the strategies." The principal is using an outside company called EDIT for training faculty members on the use of PASS within their daily instructional strategies. The teachers' work within their departments is aligning curriculum and highlighting and tabbing their textbooks to make sure they are teaching the most highly tested PASS, taught as a priority on the EOI exams.

The top five high grid responses selected as shown in Table 5.7 are listed with examples that were discovered through multiple sources of data.

Table 5.7

PHS B Top Five Grid Responses

Responses	Examples
#10: Hiring decisions are controlled by administration (97%).	The principal, assistant principal, and department chairperson are on the interview committee. The principal submits a request-to-hire letter to the personnel director.
#11: Classes are scheduled by institutional standards (92%).	The principal prepares the master schedule with the counselor's assistance.

Table 5.7 (continued)

Responses	Examples
#1: Authority structures are centralized (82%).	The principal reports to the assistant superintendents; assistant principals and counselors report to the principal; department chairpersons report to the counselors and assistants principals; teachers report to their department chairpersons.
#8: Teaching placements are assigned and determined by the administrator(s) (74%).	The principal assigns teaching placements and planning times.
#7: Instructional materials and tools are allotted to teachers by the administrator(s) (70%).	The principal coordinates the process for ordering textbooks, curriculum and instructional materials.

The top five high group responses selected as shown in Table 5.8 are listed with examples that were discovered through multiple sources of data.

Table 5.8

PHS B Top Five Group Responses

Responses	Examples
#7: Curricular goals are group focused (81%).	Group goals were implementing six clusters, advisory, credit recovery, Forge's reading strategies, and PASS to raise EOI and API Scores.
#11: Authority is clear with accountability to make reports and evaluations (72%).	The principal is accountable to the assistant superintendents; assistant principals and counselors are accountable to the principal; department chairpersons are accountable to the counselors and assistant principals; teachers are accountable to their department chairpersons.
#1: Work and labor activities are planned by the group of teachers and administrators (72%).	The activities director and administrators prepare the school calendar.
#4: Work is organized for group goals (68%).	The school must support the principal's goals and the NCLB requirements.
#5: Productivity is evaluated according to group priorities (61%).	The principal uses the EOI, and API scores for evaluating productivity.

Summary

In summary, the PHS B administration maintained its high grid control in the hiring process for teachers, creation of the master schedule, the structure of the decision-making process centralized within a chain of command, the selection and determination of the teaching assignments, and the allocation of instructional resources.

The administration also influenced the focus of group curricular goals, established a clear chain of command. Activities and group goals were planned by a group of teachers and administrators, and productivity was evaluated according to the requirements of NCLB.

Grid Comparisons

The findings in both high schools revealed similarities as well as differences. While both schools are in the same district and within the same Corporate cultural quadrant differences were discovered.

The five highest PHS A grid responses are the following: hiring decisions are controlled by the principal, classes are scheduled by institutional standards, are centralized authority structures, limited teacher autonomy in curriculum selection, and curriculum decisions were determined by the administration.

The five highest PHS B grid responses are the following: hiring decisions are controlled by the administration, classes are scheduled by institutional standards and

routines, authority structures are centralized, teaching placements are assigned and determined by the administrators, and instructional materials and tools are allotted to teachers by the administrators.

Hiring decisions are controlled by administration. PHS A faculty members remembered when they were invited to join site-based interviewing committees, ask interview questions, and have input in the hiring decision. The hiring process has changed, and now, the principal, assistant principal, and department chairpersons are on the interview committee. The principal creates a list of interview questions to ask the interviewee. After the interview, the principal completes a hiring letter and the personnel director calls and offers the interviewee a job.

The highest PHS B grid response indicated that previously faculty members were invited to join site-based interviewing committees when hiring teachers and administrators. At that time hiring decisions were based on a teacher's subject area and experience. The hiring process has changed as authority has transferred to the administration for hiring teachers. Administrators have become accountable for hiring teachers that will teach to the PASS, collaborate with other faculty members, share instructional strategies, and prepare students for the end-of-instruction exams.

Classes are scheduled by institutional standards. At PHS A classes are scheduled based on the pre-enrollment requests of the students, and the principal and counselor prepare the master schedule. The principal determines the class sizes, the number of sections, and room assignments.

Previously, at PHS B, teaching assignments were determined by the teachers' knowledge, experience, and expertise in their subject areas. More recently, teaching assignments are determined by the administration and are based on the ability to improve instructional strategies and raise test scores. In previous years, the high school teachers were given authority to choose curriculum based on their knowledge, experience, and teaching fields. Today, authority for curriculum and instructional strategies has been transferred to the administration that has become responsible for holding site administration and teachers accountable for raising API scores.

Authority structures are centralized. The authority structures at PHS A are centralized and have a pre-determined chain of command and hierarchy. The principal reports to the assistant superintendents; assistant principals and counselors report to the principal; chairpersons report to the counselors and assistant principals; teachers report to their department chairpersons.

The authority structures at PHS B are centralized as the principal reports to the assistant superintendents; assistant principals and counselors report to the principal; department chairpersons report to the counselors and assistant principals; teachers report to their department chairpersons.

Individual teachers do not have autonomy. At PHS A individual teachers have limited autonomy in the curriculum decisions. Before the federal law, No Child Left Behind, was implemented, teachers were given the authority and opportunity to choose curriculum based on their knowledge, certification, and teaching experience. The

authority for curriculum and instructional strategies has been transferred to the principal who has become responsible for holding site-administration and teachers accountable for raising test scores. Within the past five years, teachers' authority over choosing the curriculum has decreased, and the focus has become an administrative priority. For example, textbook adoption, curriculum, assessments, and data collection were primarily based on teacher preference without any guidelines. Today, textbook selections, curriculum, assessments, and data collection are based on PASS alignment and must have the approval of the principal.

Curricular decisions are prescribed by the administrators. At PHS A curriculum decisions are prescribed by the administration. Approximately ten years ago, the implementation of several leadership strategies were the school's priorities, and teachers were given the opportunity to practice the clusters and advisory programs. After the federal law, NCLB, was enacted, the school's focus regarding curriculum and teaching practices changed to raising the end-of-instruction exams and API scores.

Teaching placements are assigned and determined by the administrator(s). At PHS B the principal assigns teaching placements and planning times. NCLB became a priority and classes were scheduled according to the principal's mission and focus. There was more emphasis on reading, writing, and math remediation classes.

Instructional materials and tools are allotted to teachers by the administrator(s). The principal at PHS B coordinates the process for ordering textbooks, curriculum, and instructional materials.

Group Comparisons

The findings in the high schools present similarities as well as differences. While both schools are in the same district and within the same Corporate cultural quadrant differences were discovered.

The top five PHS A group responses were the following: work activities are planned by the collective group of teachers and administrators, curricular goals are group generated, teachers work collaboratively toward instructional goals and objectives, authority is clear and corporate with much accountability to members, and work is organized for group goals and interests.

The top five PHS B group responses were the following: curricular goals are group focused, authority is clear and corporate with much accountability to make reports and evaluations, work and labor activities are planned by the collective group of teachers and administrators, work is organized for group goals and interests, and productivity is evaluated according to group priorities.

Work activities are planned by the collective group of teachers and administers. The highest group response at PHS A was that work activities are planned by the collective group of teachers and administrators. For example, teachers and administrators

have the opportunity to plan activities including the prom, parent/teacher conferences, enrollment night, schedule pick-up times, and graduation procedures.

Teachers and administrators at PHS B plan work and labor activities as a collective group of faculty members. For example, teachers have the opportunity to plan several activities including the prom, an agenda for parent/teacher conferences, enrollment night, schedule pick-up times, and graduation procedures.

Curricular goals are group generated. At PHS A curricular goals are group generated as the site-improvement team generates the mission statement and 3 or 4 objectives for the year. The goals previously included implementing six clusters, advisory, and credit recovery. The focus has changed to implementing Forge's reading strategies and PASS, with the objectives of raising EOI and API scores.

*At PHS B g*roup goals were implementing six clusters, advisory, credit recovery, Forge's reading strategies, and PASS to raise EOI and API scores. Some faculty members were of the opinion that they were traditionally a "tightly knit" group even though several new faculty embers have been hired. Current group goals have become requirements from the principal's office for vertical alignment and PASS taught in sequence. The group goals focus on improving the API scores.

Authority is clear and corporate with much accountability to members. The following chain of command is expected to be followed at PHS A: Teachers report to the department chairpersons; department chairpersons report to the assistant principals; the assistant principals report to the principal. The philosophy of teachers working in

isolation is changing to teachers working collaboratively toward instructional goals and objectives. Team planning and collaboration have become common in the PHS A teachers. Information pertaining to instructional strategies and practices that raise student test scores is shared among teachers and at department meetings.

The principal at PHS B is accountable to the assistant superintendents; assistant principals and counselors are accountable to the principal; department chairpersons are accountable to the counselors and assistant principals; and teachers are accountable to their department chairpersons. The administration has become responsible for implementing the school improvement process, and authority is clear with much accountability from members for its success. The requirements are for vertical alignment and the blueprint for PASS is implemented within a teacher's lesson plans. The department chairpersons and assistant principals have become the people-in-charge for implementing school improvement and are being held accountable for its success.

Work is organized for group goals and interests. At PHS A several teachers commented that they were a "family" several years ago, but the faculty has become more fragmented. The current group goals of NCLB have become requirements from the district office for vertical alignment, PASS being taught in sequence, and focus on improving the API scores. The administration and department chairperson have become responsible for implementing the school improvement process, and authority is clear with much accountability from members for its success. Most faculty members understand that it takes all of them working together as a team with the principal's support to raise student achievement and test scores.

At PHS B the school is organized for group goals and interests that allow the implementation of clusters and advisory. Today, the focus has changed to common planning time, remediation programs for students, vertical team alignment, and incorporating PASS into the daily instructional strategies.

Teachers work collaboratively toward instructional goals and objectives. At PHS A teachers were placed on committees to collaborate together to implement the six clusters and advisory. Teachers work with their department when implementing Forge's reading strategies, creating common assessments, and raising EOI and API scores.

Productivity is evaluated according to group priorities. The principal at PHS B uses the requirements of NCLB, EOI, and API scores as the benchmark for evaluating productivity.

Summary of Both School Sites

In summary, even though both schools were located in the Corporate quadrant a few differences were discovered. The PHS A role status had a lower grid characteristic in the location of the principal's office and the selection of the department chairpersons compared to PHS B. For example, the principal's office in PHS A was isolated, but the assistants' offices were located in different areas of the building for easy access. All of the PHS B administrative offices were isolated and protected by a large counter within one area of the building.

Faculty turnover created a lower grid consideration in the role of the department chairperson in PHS A compared to PHS B. The roles of department chairpersons in both schools were assigned to the teachers by the principals on the basis of their teaching experience and leadership abilities.

The administrative teams in both schools were influencing the amount of individual autonomy that teachers were permitted. Administrators and teachers in both schools admitted that NCLB, PASS, EOI, and API scores have decreased the amount of instructional autonomy for all teachers. Teachers in both schools were required by the administration to implement prescribed reading strategies and align curriculum to PASS to raise EOI scores which is a high grid consideration.

PHS B had the reputation of being more of a "family" or a close-knit faculty compared to PHS A. The difference has been created because there are fewer turnovers among the faculty members of PHS B and less outsider influence among some of the academic and athletic traditions. There was a small group of faculty members, who have "survived" the changes in the school's culture at PHS A. There were more outside influences, faculty members and administrators hired that have created the "less of a family atmosphere" among the faculty members.

Faculty members in PHS A have noticed a decrease in group allegiance and survival of group traditions compared to PHS B. A few faculty members from PHS A criticized the principal for decreasing the numbers of pep assemblies and traditions during the past few years but admitted this change has also been influenced by the changing student demographics. Several faculty members in PHS B have clung to a few academic and athletic traditions even though they have less than enthusiastic support by

the current principal, but they also admitted these traditions have been influenced by the changing student demographics.

In conclusion, the grid and group framework allows the reader the opportunity to understand the relationship between the implementation of the leadership strategies and the school's culture. The findings along with additional descriptions will be used as guides for implementing the six strategies in other high schools and will be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations

The study illustrated an understanding of school culture and its usefulness to administrators and teachers during the implementation process of the school improvement strategies. The study of Mary Douglas' grid and group typology was applied during the implementation process to describe and possibly predict the behavior of the participant. Both school sites were placed in one of four quadrants identified by Douglas (Harris, 1995).

In Chapter I, the introduction and background of the study, and also the implementation of the six school improvement strategies were presented. Educational leaders included principals and teachers. When school improvement procedures were implemented, teachers and administrators exhibited behavior that either supported or resisted the process. The application of Douglas' Typology enhanced the understanding of administrators' and teachers' perceptions about the implementation of the strategies.

A review of literature was presented in Chapter II describing the school improvement process, details of the six leadership strategies, and a history of the SREB. Another area discovered in the literature was the presentation of differences in the school's culture. Educational leaders are surrounded by social life within their school cultures. Every school has a culture with unique roles and rules that are placed upon

every individual in the organization. These factors influence the implementation of the six school improvement strategies.

In Chapter III the purpose of the study was defined, the methodology was advanced by the research, and the qualitative approach was employed and reported. Also presented was the selection of school sites and respondents, the methods of data collection, the procedure for analyzing data, research bias, triangulation, and the trustworthiness criteria of the study.

The data gathered from the participants were presented in Chapter IV. The researcher was guided by the following questions:

1. What is the grid and group makeup of each school?
2. How does the Grid and Group Typology explain the practice of the six school improvement strategies?
3. If there are any incongruities between the grid and group makeup of each school and the data collected, how can they be explained?

In Chapter V the data were analyzed and presented as two case studies to describe the grid and group makeup of both schools that were practicing the six school improvement strategies, to study what influenced the educational leadership to implement the strategies, and described the relationship of grid and group in the decision-making process to implement the school improvement strategies. Using the information compiled from the questionnaire and interviews, the researcher described the grid and group characteristics of each school. These descriptions were linked to reported leadership strategies and common literature.

In this chapter, conclusions were drawn from the research, and the implications and recommendations were suggested for further research.

Summary

The last 20 years have witnessed unparalleled efforts to improve schools and raise student achievement. In those reform efforts "educational leadership" has become a popular term and is considered a solution for the many problems of modern education. Most notably, in a recent SREB publication, *Leading School Improvement: What the Research Says (2001),* the authors stated that the six school improvement strategies are essential in the improvement of instruction and student achievement: "(1) raising the bar, (2) increasing student engagement and motivation, (3) providing focused, sustained professional development, (4) providing organizational and management practices, (5) building linkages, and (6) monitoring and accelerating improvement" (Hoachlander et al., 2001, p. i). A problem the authors of this publication admit is that while educational leadership is vitally important in school reform, improvement of instruction, and student achievement, "Most evidence on how to implement these strategies is ambiguous" (Hoachlander et al., 2001, p. 11).

The predicament of why certain educational leaders practice the six school improvement strategies when others do not is an important issue in education today. There is evidence the strategies are effective even without total acceptance, and even when educational leadership agrees on a strategy, it can be implemented incorrectly. However, a single strategy implemented in isolation is unlikely to influence student

achievement but blends many practices into a balanced package of school improvement (Hoachlander et al., 2001).

The qualitative methods used to gather data for this study were participant questionnaires, observations, documents, artifacts, and interviews with principals and teachers.

Analysis of the interviews was done from verbatim transcription. The field notes were taken and analyzed along with the interviews. The analysis of documents and artifacts took place as they were gathered. All documents, interviewing transcripts, and observation notes were reviewed before and after the next data collection session (Bogdon & Biklen, 1982). As the data was collected it was physically organized into descriptive themes that emerged during the data collection and preliminary analysis, and then, extending the analysis to examine the findings in consideration of existing literature and theory.

Summary of Findings

The finding in this study revealed some similarities and differences in the study of the two high schools that were studied. PHS A and PHS B according to their grid and group make up were placed in the Corporate culture which is a high grid and high group category.

The findings also discovered barriers and incentives to the implementation of the six school improvement strategies. In PHS A and PHS B the following barriers emerged: the lack of buy-in, principal support, financial support, professional development, and

community support. In both schools, the incentives included improving instructional strategies and student learning, raising EOI and API scores, and student achievement.

Conclusions

The following research questions guided this study and are discussed below:

What is the grid and group makeup of each school? PHS A and PHS B according to the responses of the questionnaires placed themselves in the corporate culture with different degrees of the following characteristics. According to Harris (1995):

- Emphasis on achieved role status
- Limited individual autonomy
- Strict insider-outsider rules
- Group survival
- High allegiance to the group (p.640)

The emphasis on achieved role status and low to moderate competition was evident in PHS A and PHS B. Faculty members were hired and identified working in schools with strong academic traditions.

Faculty members within PHS A understood the role of the lead teachers or department chairpersons who achieved this status based on experience, leadership, and teacher turnover. The competition for these academic expert positions was low but increasing slowly among teachers. Even though experience and leadership were the main

factors to achieve the lead teacher status, faculty turnover was changing the attitude of being a "family."

Faculty members at PHS B also respected the achieved roles of the department chairperson or lead teacher. There were less competition and faculty turnover and a greater feeling of a "family" atmosphere compared to PHS A. There were more lead teachers and department chairpersons who were serving in their leadership roles and capacities for a longer period of time. Many faculty members remained at PHS B until retirement because of their individual identification with this traditional institution.

The faculty members at PHS A and PHS B perceived a decrease in individual autonomy and insulation during the past few years as the school's focus has changed because of No Child Left Behind. Administrators and teachers in the schools are responsible to cover the PASS in their daily lesson plans and instructional strategies. The administration believes the site administration, lead teachers, and faculty members are all responsible for raising test scores.

The strict insider-outsider rules have been influential within these schools throughout their history based on the tradition of high academic standards. Traditionally, faculty members taught in the junior high schools and then were promoted to PHS A or PHS B where they taught for many years and then retired. Many administrators followed the same promotional track, starting their careers as junior high administrators, and eventually promoted to the high school administration office. Today, both high schools are hiring more teachers and administrators from outside the school system. In the high schools these hiring practices are contributing to a negative feeling among faculty

members who are experiencing less of a family atmosphere and negative changes in academic and athletic traditions.

The emphasis of group survival and high allegiance to group has traditionally been a priority in the corporate school culture. Teachers and administrators have always been identified and respected as a result of group membership in these exemplary high schools.

PHS A has a rich group tradition with high allegiance in academics and athletics which has declined fairly rapidly over the past ten years. The decline in group survival and allegiance has been attributed to changes in the school's focus and goals, teacher and administrator turnover, the changing school culture and demographics, and the lack of emphasis on group survival.

PHS B has a proud group of alumni who still believe in the tradition and high allegiance of academics and athletic excellence which has declined less rapidly than at PHS A. The decline in group survival at PHS B has been attributed to the changes in the school's focus, faculty and administrator turnover, and changes in the school's culture and demographics.

Table 6.1

Manifestations of Strategies

Manifestations of Strategies	PHS A	PHS B
Raising Expectations	The school improvement committee "set high expectations for all students." Previously the school implemented six clusters and advisory. Recently, the school implemented credit recovery and Forge's reading strategies.	The school improvement committee established the following goal: "incorporating higher-level thinking skills across the curriculum." The six clusters and advisory began approximately ten years ago, and recently Forge's reading strategies and the ninth-grade academy were implemented.

Table 6.1 (continued)

Manifestations of Strategies	PHS A	PHS B
Increasing Motivation	The school improvement plan includes connecting career and technical studies to real life and connecting college prep to real life. The Health cluster was successful because of the curriculum, fieldtrips, and mentoring. The advisory teachers coordinated enrollment procedures and academic and career planning with parents and students.	The school improvement committee aligned programs and curriculum to promote increased student participation in fostering post high school academic success. The HSTW strategies promoted the development of clusters that gave students the opportunity to connect curriculum and real-life applications. Students enrolled in advisory to develop personal relationships with teachers and plan their academic and career objectives.

Table 6.1 (continued)

Manifestations of Strategies	PHS A	PHS B
Focused Professional Development	The school hired a HSTW coordinator approximately ten years ago. A few teachers participated in the HSTW summer conference. Today, all teachers are required to implement Forge's reading strategies and PASS into their daily instructional strategies for improving student literacy, and improving API scores.	The school hired a HSTW coordinator approximately ten years ago. About two-thirds of all teachers participated in the HSTW summer conference. Today, all teachers are required to implement Forge's reading strategies and PASS into their daily instructional strategies to improve the end-of-instruction and API scores.

Table 6.1 (continued)

Manifestations of Strategies	PHS A	PHS B
Organizational Practices	Each school site received budget allocations from the district office. The site administration has become more involved I the selection of curriculum textbooks, and instructional resources. The credit recovery class was implemented for at-risk seniors.	Each school site received budget allocations from the district office. The school site administration has become more involved in the selection of curriculum, textbooks, and instructional resources. The ninth grade academy was developed for at-risk students to accelerate their academic progress, and prevent these students from dropping out.

Table 6.1 (continued)

Manifestations of Strategies	PHS A	PHS B
Building Linkages	The HSTW grant received ten years ago established linkages between teachers, administrators, and the community. The health and business clusters were successful because they created linkages among the lead teacher, students, and members of the business community. Advisory required teachers to communicate with parents, turn in a monthly phone log, and build relationships with students and parents on enrollment night.	The HSTW grant received established linkages between teachers, administrators, and the community. The health cluster was successful because of the linkage established among the teachers, students, and hospital representatives. Advisory promoted the development of personal relationships among teachers, students, and parents on enrollment night, as plans were established to meet the student's academic objectives.

Table 6.1 (continued)

Manifestations of Strategies	PHS A	PHS B
Monitoring Improvement	NCLB has increased the number of classroom assessments that were given to students. The results were utilized for feedback and collaboration on effective teaching strategies. Data, EOI and API scores were desegregated and charted. Data were used to improve instructional strategies, implement Forge's reading strategies, and increase EOI and API scores.	The accountability of NCLB has forced teachers to provide students with frequent classroom assessments. The results were utilized for improving instructional strategies, test test-taking abilities, and raising API scores. Teachers were required to incorporate Forge's reading strategies and PASS into their daily instructional strategies. The data from EOI and API were charted and teachers collaborated and discussed effective teaching strategies.

How does the Grid and Group Typology explain the practice of the six school improvement strategies?

The research findings of this study and the analysis of the data revealed how the grid and group typology explains the practice of the six leadership strategies and the following major themes and conclusions emerged:

Teacher Buy-in Must Occur During the Implementation Process

The first conclusion drawn was the understanding of the importance of teacher support and buy-in during the implementation process of the school improvement leadership strategies. The data revealed administrators in both schools valued teacher input and buy-in and believed it was crucial for successful implementation of the strategies at each high school. Faculty members in the high schools believed the administration should have allowed more input, because the more input that administrators allowed the more loyalty, job satisfaction, job clarity and less burn-out they received from their faculty members (Howard, 1998).

Approximately ten years ago, both schools hired a coordinator to facilitate the implementation of the HSTW and leadership strategies. The principals and faculty members at PHS A and PHS B responded in different ways.

The principal at PHS A encouraged teachers to buy into the professional development opportunities. Some faculty members took advantage of the summer workshops and other training opportunities. A small number of clusters and advisory developed and were practiced. The buy-in had some support from the principal and

faculty members, and other faculty members ignored the opportunity. Later, the resignation of the HSTW coordinator and budget cuts stunted the practice of the strategies. The clusters are still in existence and the advisory program is currently being implemented but with minimal support from the lead teachers.

The previous principal at PHS B offered professional development opportunities and with two-thirds of the teachers participating. Several strategies were implemented that included six clusters, advisory, and the ninth-grade academy. As the implementation process continued problems were encountered such as budget cuts, the resignation of the HSTW coordinator, and principals retiring, derailed the implementation of the strategies. Currently, the successful health cluster, advisory, and the ninth-grade academy at PHS B are practiced.

Administrative Support Allowed the School Improvement Process to be Implemented More Successfully

The second conclusion drawn revealed the importance of administrative support that must be provided for faculty members to implement the strategies. For the various school improvement strategies to be implemented, the administrator has to be more involved and supportive than just granting "permission." The administrator must provide the resources, training time for faculty members, and allow community members, parents, and students to participate in the implementation process (Hutton, 2000).

The assistant principal at PHS A was responsible for coordinating the school improvement process and was of the opinion the strategies were important for students.

One faculty member commented that Mrs. Milton was supportive of the HSTW strategies, but the principal and district administration only provided “lip service.” Faculty members involved in the clusters and advisory programs opined having input from the administration was important, but they wanted more administrative involvement, support, time, and coordination for professional development training.

The previous principal at PHS B was a strong advocate of the implementation of the leadership strategies. Approximately two-thirds of the faculty attended summer retreats and professional development opportunities for training and understanding the practice of the strategies. The administrative support began to decline after the previous principal and the district’s HSTW coordinator resigned, and budget cuts became a reality. Faculty members believed the implementation of the strategies had become non- existent. Dr. Dean, the current principal, was not supportive of the other strategies except for the ninth-grade academy.

Financial Resources Were a Vital Part of the Implementation Process and to Expand the School Improvement Procedures

The third conclusion was the belief that financial support is vital in the planning and implementation process for school improvement programs. The principal should act as an entrepreneur seeking financial assistance from a variety of sources. Faculty members that were involved in grant writing developed partnerships with businesses and community agencies that assisted with financial resources (Bottoms & O’Neill, 2001).

Approximately ten years ago, both principals discussed the initial HSTW grant that was acquired and committed to the schools. The financial support was available at the beginning to implement the strategies but has been reduced throughout the implementation process. The individual school sites were required to meet certain benchmarks in the implementation process or encounter a reduction in funding. The district also experienced budget cuts that almost eliminated the professional development process to train and implement the strategies.

Several faculty members in the schools believed the financial support needed to completely implement the HSTW strategies should be a priority. Faculty members who were involved from the beginning of the implementation process seemed frustrated about the lack of financial support from the district office and had a lack of understanding that some of the financial support and changes were made because of the budget cuts within the school district. Faculty members from the high schools described the financial limits and cuts to professional development as a lack of effort and priority from the district for the implementation of these strategies.

Professional Development was the Most Important Factor for Disseminating Information and Training for Implementing School Improvement Programs

The fourth conclusion is indicative of the significance of the professional development process for understanding and implementing the leadership strategies. The professional development process cultivated a culture of implementation and change.

Both principals agreed there was a need for professional development in their respective schools.

Paula Milton held to the opinion that the HSTW program was a successful program, and professional development opportunities were available several years ago. About one-third of the faculty members attended the national HSTW summer conference. Upon their return the number of clusters offered expanded to six, and advisory was implemented. Budget cuts, the resignation of the HSTW coordinator, and the federal law NCLB led to a decline in the amount of professional development opportunities.

Ten years ago, approximately two-thirds of the faculty attended a summer retreat and the summer workshops regarding the implementation of the HSTW strategies. The training led to the implementation of six clusters, advisory, and the ninth-grade academies. Dr. Dean, was not as familiar with the HSTW program and strategies compared to his predecessors. Dr. Dean attended professional development workshops at which the ninth-grade academies to educate and support at-risk students was discussed, and he planned to implement this process next year at PHS B. He believed HSTW's program was beneficial for students, and he is trying to educate himself about the strategies. Many faculty members commented about the lack of support and professional development for the practice of the strategies under the leadership of Dr. Dean.

The focus of professional development has changed from the implementation of the HSTW strategies to meeting the requirements of NCLB and raising standardized test scores. Faculty members at the schools held the opinion that the district could provide professional development for the implementation of the strategies and increase student achievement, along with meeting state mandated testing requirements and raising scores.

Community and Business Support was a Vital Linkage for the Students, Teachers and Administrators in the School Improvement Process

The fifth conclusion gives insight into the significance of the business and community relationships when the six leadership strategies were implemented, which allowed educators and employers to maintain healthy and appropriate relationships. The needs of both entities were focused and compatible with the long-term interests of the students. Business leaders contributed valuable resources, and educators provided curriculum and instruction that led to highly trained students ready for college or a career (Hoachlander, Alt & Beltranena, 2001).

Paula Milton understood the importance of the business relationship within the schools. She opined the relationships of the lead teacher, administration, and the business community contributed to the success of several clusters. The health cluster was considered the most successful because of the working relationships that were established and practiced. Several faculty members agreed that business members provided valuable resources such as job-shadowing, mentoring and financial support that made the clusters successful.

Dr. Dean believed the business relationships were important for implementation of the strategies especially the clusters, although he was not as familiar with these relationships as Mrs. Milton. He believed there was a lack of communication between the district and business community which created a lack of understanding and implementation of the strategies and clusters. Faculty members shared their concerns about the lack of relationships between the school and the business members, and they

were of the opinion that the lead teacher and business leader's relationship was important for the successful implementation of the program, but they needed the administrative support to be the adhesive in these relationships.

The following minor themes emerged during the study giving insight into the implementation of the six school improvement strategies: lead teacher-role, data-driven decision making, small learning communities or clusters, advisory, and the change process.

The Successful Implementation of the Leadership Strategies, Clusters, Advisory and Academies was Greatly Influenced by the Effectiveness of the Lead Teacher or Chairperson.

Administrators and teachers from PHS A and PHS B recognized the importance of the lead teacher's leadership role. The leadership displayed by the lead teachers was the main reason the health clusters were the most successful clusters in both schools.

Administrators and Teachers from Both Schools Discussed the Importance of Completing Pre and Post Test Assessments, and Implementing Reading Strategies into every Classroom to Improve the Scores on the End-of-Instruction Exams.

Administrators and faculty members were responsible for the training and implementing reading strategies across the curriculum into every classroom to raise the end-of-instruction test scores. Data from periodic classroom and standardized

assessments were expected to be utilized by administrators and teachers for improving instructional strategies, student centered learning, teacher collaboration, and raising test scores.

Placing Students into Small Learning Communities, Clusters, and Advisory is a Beneficial Strategy for Improving Student Achievement.

Students who develop beneficial relationships with their teachers through these smaller learning environments are more likely to improve their academic achievements, and evaluate their career and college interests. The principal at PHS B was of the opinion the ninth-grade academies reduced absenteeism, truancy, and increased academic achievement and test scores for at-risk students.

The Advisory Program was Another Important Strategy that Gives Students the Opportunity to Establish Relationships with Teachers and Provides Resources for Academic and Career Planning.

In the advisory program students entered an advisory class during their ninth-grade year and continued with the same students and teachers until they graduated. The biggest challenge for implementing advisory was creating a curriculum that students and teachers support and utilize. The advisory program which met monthly developed relationships and provided academic and career guidance.

Many Administrators and Faculty Members in Both Schools Admitted they have Resisted Educational Change.

As educators are required to implement school improvement strategies to meet the requirements of NCLB, they remember that most "change" is met with resistance. Administrators who allow input from faculty members, encourage two-way communication, provide continuous feedback, and empower teachers to minimize resistance.

If there are any incongruities between the grid and group makeup of each school and the data collected, how can they be explained?

The following table 6.2 compares the differences between the grid and group makeup of each school.

Table 6.2

Grid/Group Comparisons

Grid/Group Comparisons	PHS A	PHS B
Emphasis on achieved role status	There is an average, but declining emphasis on achieving role status, such as department chairperson status through age, grade, and experience.	There is an average, but less declining emphasis on achieving role status, such as department chairperson status through age, grade, and experience.

Table 6.2 (continued)

Grid/Group Comparisons	PHS A	PHS B
Limited Autonomy	There is currently an average amount of individual autonomy, which is declining because the district administration has been increasing rules, regulations, agreements, and procedures for faculty members.	There is currently an average amount of individual autonomy, which is declining because the district administration has been increasing rules, regulations, agreements, and procedures for faculty members.
Strict insider-outsider rules	There is an increase in faculty turnover which has created fewer social relationships that are protected by borders against outside alliances.	There is less faculty turnover which has allowed more social relationships to be protected by insiders rules or borders against outside alliances.

Table 6.2 (continued)

Grid/Group Comparisons	PHS A	PHS B
Group Survival	Administrators and teachers feel they have lost the traditions of academic and athletic excellence, school pride, and are viewed by the community as inferior to PHS B.	Administrators and teachers have a greater sense of athletic and academic excellence. Traditional school pride is evident and they are viewed as superior to PHS A in the community.
High Allegiance to Group	Individual association was heavily derived from group membership, but his sense of pride has drastically declined. Teachers said, "We are not the family we used to be."	Individual association was previously, to a large extent derived from group membership, but this sense of pride has declined. Teachers are still viewed "as a family."

Theory

The theoretical framework for this study is built upon the work of Mary Douglas. Douglas originally designed the grid and group framework to deal with cultural diversity in remote places while observing rituals, symbols, witchcraft, food, and drinking habits.

Her aim was to show the relevance of anthropology for modern society's grid-group cultural theory website (2004).

Through her typology researchers are given the opportunity to discover the sociological, conceptual, and methodological barriers in culture inquiry. Douglas' (1982) research identifies individuals where cultural and environmental factors affect the ability to make decisions.

This study contributes to the Douglas' theory base because teachers and administrators have written and unwritten rules they are expected to follow within their school's culture that are supported by the social organization. According to Abrandt (2005), "Certain cultures always correspond with a certain pattern of social relations and that these cannot be combined in any other way. Grid/Group also claims that there is only four different ways that culture and social relations can be combined in an individual's life and that these four ways can be measured in two dimensions."

Harris (1995) explains the relationship between the individual and the social environment through grid and group, that describe the social life found in every social structure. Douglas' theory contains four classifications or quadrants that describe a multicolored understanding of the shared life within a social system (Harris, 1995).

The primary purpose of this research was to apply grid and group within two schools and determine if the organizational culture influenced the implementation of the six school improvement strategies. The following major themes emerged that influenced the implementation process: teacher input or buy-in, administrative support, financial resources, professional development, and establishing school and community relationships. The following minor themes that emerged were: lead-teacher role, data-

driven decision making, small learning communities or clusters, advisory, and the change process.

Research

Grid and group were originally used by Douglas in anthropology studies, but its typology is valuable across possible alternatives of cultures (Thompson, 1990). The framework is valuable because of its constructivist foundation which allows people the opportunity to interpret their world within the social organization (Harris, 1995).

The study contributed to grid and group research as the following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the grid and group makeup of each school?
2. How does the Grid and Group Typology explain the practice of the six school improvement strategies?
3. If there are any incongruities between the grid and group makeup of each school and the data collected, how can they be explained?

The following six leadership strategies are essential for improved instruction and student achievement: (1) raising the bar of higher expectations, (2) increasing student engagement and motivation (3) providing focused, sustained professional development; (4) providing organized management practices (5) building linkages, and (6) monitoring and accelerating improvement. According to the SREB, research has shown when these six strategies are implemented, instructional strategies and student achievement improve (Hoachlander, Alt & Beltranena, 2001.

During this research, multiple methods of data collection such as interviews, surveys, observations, and document analysis were used to verify the findings. The grid and group typology provided insight into different ways a particular school may implement the strategies.

This case study is important for educators who are reformers, because most school cultures are neutral to reform and resistant to change, making school improvement a challenging process. Failure of educators to change the culture makes reforms incapable of making a difference (Barth, 2002). A school's culture is either warm and positive or negative and toxic; a school's culture either prohibits or promotes reform (Barth, 2002).

School cultures are constructed of perceptions and actions which are integrated into a cohesive social system. According to Harris (1995), "social construction, pedagogy, and educational competences are culturally specific and must be considered within the structure of social relationships which produce these specified competencies" (p. 641).

School cultures can operate as other organizational systems. They import resources from the outside, create a transformation process, and export the transformed products to other organizations (Bergquist, 1998). Realistically, schools operate in an imperfect world . There are about 20,000 independent school districts in the United States, each with various conditions and traditions. Even with unanimous agreement and commitment, the complexity of the educational or transformational process will produce variation in outcomes (Sarason, 1996).

Social relationships and representative traditions are important issues when describing schools as organizational cultures. According to Harris (1995), "a focus on

individual and group relationships is vital. Values and practices relating to educational objectives, group vision, service and responsibility, and the communal aspect of a school are inextricably linked to the order of social relations, personal identity, and educational practices" (p. 644).

The grid and group model may provide understanding of how changing, improving instructional strategies may be resisted or implemented in different schools. Individuals must belong to one of the quadrants, but they may move around among the bureaucratic, collectivist, corporate, and individualist contexts (Abrandt, 2005).

Practice

The grid and group typology is valuable for superintendents and principals who are planning to implement school reform and meet the requirements and accountability of NCLB. Educational leadership is becoming more responsible for directing and improving instructional strategies and raising student achievement (Bottoms, 2001). Educational leaders can use the Douglas typology to better understand what quadrant their school or schools are operating before implementing change and school improvement practices.

Schools are isolating the principal for the responsibility of instructional leadership, but instructional leadership is everyone's responsibility. Educators are developing the leadership capacity of the whole school community. Teachers and administrators are working together to change the culture of a school, so that innovations, higher standards, and raising student achievement are accepted as elements of the culture (Barth, 2002).

An effective leader (teacher, principal, superintendent, or school board member) of school improvement according to (Hoachlander, Alt, & Beltranena, 2001), "(1) understands the elements that contribute to student learning; (2) can assemble these elements into workable, coherent instructional programs; and (3) can work with faculty and other stakeholders to implement these instructional programs in a fashion appropriately tailored to particular students and local circumstances" (p. 11).

According to (Hoachlander, Alt, & Beltranena, 2001), "The reasons for slow progress are many and complex. One that is receiving growing attention is the need for stronger school leadership. We must develop the teachers, principals, superintendents, school board members and other educators who direct and implement changes in curriculum, instruction, and school organization" (p. i).

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the data analysis, conclusions, and findings of this research study, it was fitting to recommend three further studies in the areas of the relationship of the school culture and the implementation of the six leadership strategies. These recommendations were as follows:

1. Conduct a study at an elementary school, middle school, or university level to understand if the perceptions of the relationships of the school culture and the implementation of school improvement strategies are viewed the same?

2. Implement a case study at two high schools located in different school districts that practiced the six leadership strategies. What is the relationship between the culture and the implementation of the six leadership strategies?
3. Conduct a case study in the business community with the Mary Douglas' framework to research the relationship between the culture and work-related improvement strategies. Are there any improvement strategies that would be valuable for educators?
4. Conduct a study that compares and contrasts two school settings that fall into different grid and group categories.

Implications

I have witnessed several school improvement strategies and programs during my 15 years as an educator. My focus as a teacher and administrator has been on improving the teaching and learning process and preparing students for their academic and career objectives. After attending different workshops emphasizing school improvement and improving student achievement, I discovered the SREB and HSTW school improvement strategies. I believe these strategies are the best solutions for our educational problems focusing on state, local, and school district resources and efforts on the development of strong theories and practices for school improvement (Elmore, 2003).

The literature revealed the significance of the school improvement process which included the contributions of administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community business leaders, and the importance of the relationship of the school culture and the

implementation of the leadership strategies. Douglas' (1982) framework explains the school's culture which was placed within a quadrant based on their individual and group social characteristics.

As the data regarding the practice of the school improvement strategies process were collected, I noticed the school's culture either encouraged or resisted changes that were mandatory for successfully implementing the leadership strategies and raising student achievement. Teachers wanted to be included in the process and have input throughout the entire implementation schedule. The administration should not be perceived as forcing "top down" changes but should be supportive in the school improvement process. Financial resources should be available throughout the entire implementation process to provide the needed resources. Professional development provided the knowledge and training that supported the practice of the school improvement strategies. The business and community members were important stakeholders in the planning and implementation stages.

As school districts continue to recruit principals and faculty members, it is beneficial to hire professional educators that are willing to work as a team within the culture to implement the school improvement changes that are needed to raise student achievement. This research study supported the problem statement that educational leadership is vitally important in school reform, improvement of instruction, and student achievement, "Most evidence on how to implement these strategies is ambiguous" (Hoachlander, et. al., 2001, p. 11).

Finally, No Child Left Behind has changed the focus of school improvement to raising test scores. Today, it is extremely important for administrators, teachers, parents,

students, and community members to work together with a common focus for implementing school improvement strategies, preparing students for their academic and career choices, and raising test scores.

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Appendix A

Consent Form

I, _____, hereby authorize or direct Brian Chastain, to perform the following the procedure.

Procedure: The individual named will be interviewed about his/her experiences, insights and understandings regarding the interrelationships of organizational culture and the attempts of school leadership to implement *High Schools That Works* (HSTW) strategies intended to (1) raise expectations for staff and student performance (2) increase student engagement and motivation (3) provide focused, sustained professional development (4) implement proven, effective management practices (5) build linkages and (6) monitor and accelerate improvement in these two schools.

The individual has the right to decline to answer any question at any time or withdraw his/her participation after notifying the researcher. After the interview has been transcribed, the individual has the right to examine the transcription to clarify any misinterpretations. The responses will be analyzed for significant sources of data. All records of this study will be kept confidential, and the individual will not be identifiable by name or description in any reports or publications regarding this study.

Duration: The tape-recorded interview will last approximately forty-five minutes. The researcher will develop the questions being asked.

Confidentiality: Pseudonyms will be used in the final document. Only the researcher will have access to the actual names of the participants. Tape-recorded interviews will be transcribed. Any information that is unacceptable by the interviewee for the final document will be deleted. It is important for the teacher participants to understand that the school's principal will not have access to the teachers' responses.

Potential Risks and Benefits: Although no questions of a personal or intrusive nature are intended, the interviewee may refuse to answer such questions at any time. Principals that practice these six leadership strategies may benefit from this research as they strive to implement them within their school culture.

The researcher and the participant must sign this consent form before collecting any type of data in this study while using any of the following qualitative methods: questionnaires, interviews, observations, analyzing documents, and reviewing artifacts. All records and data collected will be stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked office (confidential) and destroyed (shredded) within one year after the research project is completed.

I understand that participation is voluntary, there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am able to withdraw my consent and participation in this research project at anytime without penalty after notifying the researcher. I understand that records of this study will be kept confidential, and that I will not be identifiable by name or description

in any reports or publications about this study. If I have any questions about this study or wish to withdraw, I may contact Brian Chastain (405) 789-1768, or Sharon Bacher, IRB Executive Secretary, Oklahoma State University, 415 Whitehurst, Stillwater, Ok 74078, (405) 744-5700.

I have read this consent document, I understand it's contents, and I sign it freely and voluntarily to participate in this study under the conditions described. A copy of this consent document has been given to me.

Date: _____ Time: _____ (a.m./p.m.)

Participant Signature: _____

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the participant before requesting the participant to sign it.
Principal Investigator/Researcher Signature: _____

Appendix B

Letter of Introduction

September 23, 2003

Brian Chastain
1513 Markwell Place
Oklahoma City, OK 73127

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to introduce myself. I am a doctoral student at Oklahoma State University, pursuing a doctorate in Higher Educational Administration. I am currently serving as the principal of El Reno High School where I have been for the past four years. I was previously employed as an assistant principal at Yukon Mid-High School, and prior experience to this; I was a teacher at Putnam City West High School.

I am conducting a case study for insight and understanding regarding the interrelationships of organizational culture and the attempts of school leadership to implement the *High Schools That Work* strategies intended to (1) raise expectations for staff and student performance (2) increase student engagement and motivation (3) provide focused, sustained professional development (4) implement proven, effective management practices (5) build linkages and (6) monitor and accelerate improvement in two schools.

I am seeking the assistance of those teachers currently assigned to Public High School and Public High School B to complete a questionnaire and possibly volunteer to submit to a taped interview, lasting approximately 45 minutes. The data collected from the questionnaires and interviews will be kept strictly confidential. If you decide to participate in this research, your identity and responses will not be revealed to the principal. I have been granted access to Public High School A and Public High School B by the Director of Secondary Education, Dr. Xxxxxxx Xxxxx, and the assistant principalsof both high schools. If you are agreeable to the possibility of an interview, please respond to indicate when you are available. I will make every effort to comply with your schedule and preferences for date and time.

Please email me at brian_chastain@hotmail.com or call me at 789-1768 or 830-1356.

Sincerely,

Brian Chastain

Appendix C

Demographic Information

Name_____ Home address_____

Gender: (Circle one) Male Female

Home Phone #_____ Cell Phone #_____

E-mail address_____

Grade level(s) taught_____ Subjects taught_____

Years teaching experience_____ Years at this school_____

Number of year's experience as a school administrator_____

Bachelor's Degree_____
(Name of College/University) (Major)

Master's Degree_____
(Name of College/University) (Major)

Doctorate Degree_____
(Name of College/University) (Major)

Ethnicity_____ Age_____

Professional Certification_____

Appendix D

Interview Questions:

1. Describe how the six High School That Works leadership strategies are practiced in your school?
2. Describe how your school has raised expectations for students?
3. Describe how your school has increased student engagement and motivation?
4. Describe the professional development that is offered for the implementation of the six leadership strategies?
5. Describe the organizational and management practices implemented in your school?
6. Describe the linkages that have been established in your school?
7. Describe how your school has monitored and accelerated improvement?
8. Describe your school's culture?
9. Describe the interrelationships of your school's culture and the implementation of the six leadership strategies?

Appendix E

Letter of Permission

July 3, 2003

Dr. Xxxxxx Xxxxx
Director of Secondary Education
Public High Schools
Xxxx XX xx
Xxxxxxxxx Xxxxx, XX xxxxx

Dear Dr. Xxxxx:

I am currently in the process of fulfilling the research requirements as a student in the Oklahoma State University's Doctoral of Education program. I am requesting your permission to gain access to the staffs of Public High School A and Public High School B. I have already spoken to assistant principals Xxxxx Xxxxxxxx and Xxxxxxx Xxxxxx, and pending your approval, they have indicated their willingness to participate.

I would like to conduct research using the following data collection methods: questionnaire, tape-recorded interviews, direct observation, documentation, and artifact analysis. I will seek representatives of varying ages, genders, races, levels of experience and areas of curricular interest present at the time of the study. I would like to interview the two assistant principals previously mentioned and ten teachers from each high school. While high school students may be present during the observations during the school day, they will not be interview subjects. I have attached a copy of my Institutional Review Board application packet to allow greater insight. If you would like more information including a copy of my research proposal please let me know.

Upon receiving approval of the Institutional Review Board, the study will begin in the fall of 2003. Data collection will continue through the July, August, September, and October. Any necessary follow-up interviews will be conducted to ensure credibility including using member checks to ensure accurate representation of the subject's words and ideas. Data gathering and analysis should be complete by January 2004. All data will be destroyed within one year after receiving project approval.

There are no anticipated risks involved in the participation of this research.

If you are willing to allow me to proceed with this research, please indicate so with your signature. If you require additional assurances, please contact me for further discussion.

Sincerely,

Brian Chastain
1513 Markwell Place
Oklahoma City, OK 73127

Permission for access to the staffs of Public High School A and Public High School B is granted:

Dr. Xxxxxx Xxxxx_____ Date_____

Appendix F

Grid/Group Typology Questionnaire

For Instructional and Curricula Interests

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

Position (check one):

○ Teacher ○ Staff ○ Administrator (specify level _____)

○ Other (Please explain)_____

Number of years service in this school: _____

INSTRUCTIONS:
Below are 22 pairs of statements. For each pair mark the statement that BEST represents the work environment in your school. As you answer each question, please remember to keep in mind the entire school site but NOT the entire district or school system as a whole. (Note: In the statements below the term, "administrator," refers to site administration at any level, including principal, assistant principal, or anyone assigned with formal administrative responsibility.

GRID CONSIDERATIONS

LOW (-1 each)	HIGH (+1 each)
1. ○ Authority structures are decentralized.	○ Authority structures are centralized.
2. ○ Work and labor activities are self-directed by individual teachers.	○ Work and labor activities are authority-directed by the administrators.
3. ○ Individual teachers have full autonomy in curriculum selection; i.e., there is no mandated curriculum.	○ Individual teachers have no autonomy in curriculum selection; i.e., there is a mandated curriculum.
4. ○ Individual teachers have full autonomy in generating educational goals and objectives for their classes.	○ Individual teachers have no autonomy in generating educational goals and objectives for their classes.

5. ○ Instructional practices and strategies are self-determined by individual teacher.	○ Instructional strategies are determined by the administrator(s).
6. ○ Curricular decisions are individually negotiated with each teacher.	○ Curricular decisions are prescribed by the administrator(s).
7. ○ Instructional materials and tools are obtained by each teacher through individual competition or negotiation.	○ Instructional materials and tools are allotted to teachers by the administrator(s).
8. ○ Teaching assignments are achieved and determined by teachers through individual competition or negotiation.	○ Teaching assignments are assigned and determined by the administrator(s).
9. ○ Teachers are motivated by self-defined interests.	○ Teachers are motivated by institutional rewards.
10. ○ Hiring decisions are decentralized, controlled by teachers.	○ Hiring decisions are centralized, controlled by administration.
11. ○ Classes are scheduled by individual goal considerations.	○ Classes are scheduled by institutional standards and routines.

Sum of positive and negative grid scores:_____

GROUP CONSIDERATIONS

LOW (-1 each)	HIGH (+1 each)
1. ○ Work and labor activities are initiated/ planned by individual teachers acting alone.	○ Work and labor activities are initiated/ planned by the collective group of teachers and administrators..
2. ○ Social activities and work are kept separate activities.	○ Social activities and work are commingled.
3. ○ Rewards are an individual-focused payoff.	○ Rewards are group-focused payoff.
4. ○ Work is organized for individual goals and interests.	○ Work is organized for group goals and and interests.
5. ○ Productivity is evaluated according to individual priorities.	○ Productivity is evaluated according to group priorities.
6. ○ Teachers work in isolation toward instructional goals and objectives.	○ Teachers work collaboratively toward instructional goals and objectives.
7. ○ Curricular goals are individually generated.	○ Curricular goals are group generated.
8. ○ Instructional resources are individually controlled by teachers.	○ Instructional resources are corporately controlled by the school.
9. ○ Communication flows primarily through individual, informal networks.	○ Communication flows through corporate, formal networks.
10. ○ Teacher success is evaluated according to each teacher's goals and priorities.	○ Teacher success is evaluated according to group goals and priorities.
11. ○ Authority is ambiguous and fragmented little or no accountability to members.	○ Authority is clear and corporate with much accountability to members.

Sum of positive and negative group scores:_____

Appendix G

Questionnaire Statements

Grid and Group Questionnaire Statements	PHS A Total Responses	PHS B Total Responses
GRID		
Authority structures are decentralized (Low Grid)	**12**	**8**
Authority structures are centralized (High Grid)	**57**	**37**
Work and labor activities are self-directed by individual teachers (Low Grid)	**32**	**22**
Work and labor activities are authority-directed by the administrators (High Grid)	**38**	**15**
Individual teachers have full autonomy in curriculum selection; i.e., there is no mandated curriculum (Low Grid)	**14**	**15**
Individual teachers have no autonomy in curriculum selection; i.e., there is a mandated curriculum (High Grid)	**54**	**22**
Individual teachers have full autonomy in generating educational goals and objectives for their classes (Low Grid)	**45**	**19**
Individual teachers have no autonomy in generating educational goals and objectives for their classes (High Grid)	**24**	**17**
Instructional practices and strategies are self-determined by individual teacher (Low Grid)	**57**	**39**
Instructional practices and strategies are determined by the administrator(s) (High Grid)	**13**	**1**
Curricular decisions are individually negotiated with each teacher (Low Grid)	**29**	**18**
Curricular decisions are prescribed by the administrator(s) (High Grid)	**42**	**19**
Instructional materials and tools are obtained by each teacher through individual competition or negotiation (Low Grid)	**31**	**12**
Instructional materials and tools are allotted to teachers by the administrator(s) (High Grid)	**39**	**28**

Teaching assignments are achieved and determined by teachers through individual competition or negotiation (Low Grid)	**20**	**10**
Teaching assignments are assigned and determined by the administrator(s) (Low Grid)	**51**	**28**

Teachers are motivated by self-defined interests (Low Grid)	**61**	**37**
Teachers are motivated by institutional awards (High Grid)	**11**	**1**

Hiring decisions are decentralized, controlled by teachers (Low Grid)	**10**	**1**
Hiring decisions are centralized, controlled by administration (High Grid)	**62**	**38**

Classes are scheduled by individual goal considerations (Low Grid)	**10**	**3**
Classes are scheduled by institutional standards and routines (High Grid)	**60**	**36**

GROUP

Work and labor activities are initiated/planned by individual teachers acting alone (Low Group)	**12**	**11**
Work and labor activities are initiated/planned by the collective group of teachers and administrators (High Group)	**56**	**26**

Social activities and work are kept separate activities (Low Group)	**40**	**22**
Social activities and work are commingled (High Group)	**30**	**15**

Rewards are an individual-focused payoff (Low Group)	**34**	**22**
Rewards are group-focused payoff (High Group)	**34**	**12**

Work is organized for individual goals and interests (Low Group)	**22**	**12**
Work is organized for group goals and interests (High Group)	**48**	**26**

Productivity is evaluated according to individual priorities (Low Group)	**33**	**15**
Productivity is evaluated according to group priorities (High Group)	**38**	**23**

Teachers work in isolation toward instructional goals and objectives (Low Group)	**19**	**21**
Teachers work collaboratively toward instructional goals and objectives (High Group)	**51**	**18**
Curricular goals are individually generated (Low Group)	14	**7**
Curricular goals are group generated (High Group)	55	**30**
Instructional resources are individually controlled by teachers (Low Group)	**25**	**19**
Instructional resources are corporately controlled by the school (Low Group)	**43**	**19**
Communication flows primarily through individual, informal networks (Low Group)	**29**	**18**
Communication flows primarily through corporate, formal networks (High Group)	**39**	**17**
Teacher success is evaluated according to each teacher' goals and priorities (Low Group)	**37**	**18**
Teacher success is evaluated according to group goals and priorities (High Group)	**32**	**18**
Authority is ambiguous and fragmented with little or no accountability to members (Low Group)	**19**	**11**
Authority is clear and corporate with much accountability to members (High Group)	**50**	**28**

Appendix H

Institutional Review Board Approval

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 8/18/2004

Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2003 IRB Application No ED0414

Proposal Title: A CASE STUDY ON LEADING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GRID AND GROUP AND THESIX LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES ESSENTIAL IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION

Principal Investigator(s):

Brian Chastain
1513 Markwell
Oklahoma City, OK 73127

Edward Harris
308 Willard
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Dear PI :

Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Sharon Bacher, the Executive Secretary to the IRB, in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, sbacher@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Carol Olson

Carol Olson, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Brian Latimer Chastain

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: A GRID AND GROUP DESCRIPTION OF IMPROVING SCHOOLS AND RAISING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT WITH SIX SREB LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES

Major Field: Higher Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, On November 7, 1961, the son of Eugene and Carol Chastain.

Education: Graduated from Northeast High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in May 1980; received Bachelor of Science in Business Management from the University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma in May 1985. Completed the requirements for Certification in Business Education and Masters of Science in Educational Administration from the University of Central of Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma in December 1988 and 1995 respectively. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree in Higher Education Administration, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, December 2005.

Experience: Employed as a teacher at Putnam City West High School in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, from August 1990 to May 1997; employed as an assistant principal at Yukon High School 9th and 10th in Yukon, Oklahoma, from July 1997 to June 1999; employed as an assistant principal and principal at El Reno High School in El Reno, Oklahoma, from July 1999 to June 2005; employed as a principal at Putnam City North High School in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, from July 2005 to present.

Professional Membership: Oklahoma Association of Secondary School Principals, Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administration.

Name: Brian Latimer Chastain Date of Degree: December, 2005

Institution: Oklahoma State University Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: A GRID AND GROUP DESCRIPTION OF IMPROVING SCHOOLS AND RAISING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT WITH SIX SREB LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES

Pages in Study: 249 Candidate for the Degree of Doctorate of Education

Major Field: Higher Education

Scope and Method of Study: Using the Mary Douglas' (1982) Grid and Group Framework, the purpose of this study was to explain how organizational culture affects the implementation of the six school improvement strategies in two schools; to research and find factors that influence individual faculty members to practice the strategies; and to describe the relationships of grid and group in the decision making process to implement the practices. The research was conducted in Public High School A (PHS A) and Public High School B (PHS B), located in the southern plains in the United States. The participants included teachers and principals that were selected based on their knowledge of the six school improvement strategies and cultural awareness; their willingness to discuss the strategies; and who represents a wide range of points of views. Multiple methods of data collection were used that included a questionnaire, observation, artifacts, document analysis, and interviews.

Findings and Conclusions: Public High School A (PHS A) and Public High School B (PHS B) were depicted as high grid and high group, located in the Corporate culture, and have the following characteristics: distinct role status, limited autonomy, insider-outsider rules, group survival, and group allegiance. Even though both high schools were described as Corporate they have similarities and differences in the manifestation and implementation of the six leadership strategies. An important reason for the differences is the need for stronger school leadership which includes teachers, principals, superintendents, school board members and other educators who direct and implement changes in curriculum, instruction, and school organization.

Advisor's Approval: Dr. Ed Harris